WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH THE CHURCH?

BY

FREDERICK STANLEY ROOT

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FOREWORD.

In his book on the "Intellectual Life," Philip Gilbert Hamerton remarks: "I do not look upon an opponent as an enemy to be repelled, but as a torch-bearer to be welcomed for any light he may bring." The chief desire of the author is that the many or the few who may turn these pages will accord to him a patient hearing in the Court of Reason, even though persuaded that some of the counts in his Indictment do not hold against the Modern Church. In this spirit only will the profound utterance of Gilbert Hamerton fulfil its mission in leading the mind to dispassionate comparison of opposing views. Truth is not found in the shadow of crossing swords but in high-minded and calm debate between those who cherish with equal fervor the end sought, yet differing as to methods for achieving that end. The author has but one purpose, which is to help all good men and true in a zealous and faithful effort to build the Church into the glorious like-

ness of her Founder. To all such he extends the greetings of fraternity.

It is a courtesy herewith gratefully acknowledged that the author is permitted by the New York *Evening Post,* the *Outlook,* the *Christian Register,* of Boston, and the New York *World,* to republish, with some essential changes, the large amount of matter originally printed in the columns of these journals. Certain chapters in this volume appeared serially in the *Evening Post.*

FREDERICK STANLEY ROOT.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Frederick Stanley Root was born in 1853, in New Haven, Conn.; educated at a military school; graduated in Law at Yale, 1874, and in Divinity at Yale, 1879. He was pastor of High Street Congregational Church, Auburn, Me., and afterwards pastor of Park Church, Hartford, Conn., a church memorable for the long and exalted service of Horace Bushnell in the pastorate.

He is now General Secretary of the American Social Science Association and editor of "Social Science Journal." Mr. Root also pursued special studies in sociology at Harvard.

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WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH THE CHURCH?

CHAPTER I.

WANTED: A SOCIETY FOR THE DECREASE OF THE MINISTRY.

I WISH to avow at the very outset of this chapter that my aim is to discourage young men from entering the Christian ministry at the present juncture of affairs in the Protestant body, except under conditions which will be specifically named. Of late there has been much discussion here and there relative to the increasing difficulty of placing men trained to the gospel ministry, but in no case has it been the privilege of the writer to read a thoroughgoing, dispassionate, clear-headed summing up of the causes which make the caption of

this article a perfectly defensible thesis. The very constitution and temper of venerable seminary professors and supporters of societies for assisting young men into the ministry forbid that common-sense view of existing conditions in the church which, when fully realized, deter bright young men from the study of theology. The fact is, confirmed by abundant testimony and by the reluctant admissions of men who are interested to maintain the contrary, there never was a time when a bright, clean, self-respecting, talented, and absolutely fearless young man undertook a greater personal risk in committing himself to the restless sea of ministerial supply and demand. It would require a book in place of a chapter to demonstrate this; but if ever a fact is more easily demonstrable the writer will hail it with acclamation!

The initial note in the discussion of the problem is most significant. I refer to the all-pervasive restlessness and discontent, the ill-concealed disgust with present churchly conditions, the deep underlying anxiety for prospective bread and butter, the ominous foreboding for the future which one finds reflected in the private confidences of so many ministers now holding pastorates. A prominent officer of a missionary society

is reported to have said that in all his visitations among the clergy of a certain state, he had failed to discover a single incumbent who did not wish to make a change. I have in my possession a letter from a successful and honored pastor in New England, for fifteen years in one parish, but now desirous of change for weighty reasons, and who writes me: "It makes one sick of the whole business to see the scramble for place." Not long ago an able and useful clergyman, whose sermons are in print in a notable publication, finding it desirable to resign his pastorate, deliberately turned his attention to the study of law rather than enter upon a fierce, degrading, heart-breaking competition for another pulpit. And it was a shrewd observer in Boston, one who knows thoroughly the inside of the situation, who wrote recently to a ministerial friend, "Stick to your pulpit at any hazard! I never knew such awful times in the ministry as now." "Stick at any hazard." That is precisely what hundreds of clergymen are doing, able, upright men, and capable of rendering admirable service, but overworked or not happily married to their parishes. And they linger on because another field does not open, and because they fully realize that, once churchless, as the distinguished Dr. X. said to the

writer, "it is almost impossible to secure another parish." The very fact that such advice is given by one whose business it is to feel the pulse of the ministerial market, may well excite apprehension in clerical circles. And of such testimony the writer could furnish a dismal sufficiency.

But what is the key to such a state of affairs in the Christian church? That many pastors are happily at work is not denied. Yet why are hundreds more in a state of mental unrest and anxiety? The answer goes straight to the heart of the problem. The key to the difficulty is found in the fact that there are too many ministers—not for useful unsalaried work, but for available vacant churches. This is especially true of certain denominations. It is measurably true of all. If recollection does not play me false, Dr. Barrows some years ago conclusively showed in a remarkable paper that there are thousands of unnecessary clergymen and more thousands of unnecessary churches. The ranks are overcrowded, and will continue to be overcrowded as long as the present wretched system of ecclesiastical business management endures. A certain Congregational church in Connecticut, with by no means an inviting future, received not less than 250 applications, scattered all the way

from Maine to California. And such ratio is more than a thrice-told tale. The guarded and reluctant admissions of religious weeklies reinforce this statement. For example, the Boston *Congregationalist* plainly declared that in certain sections of the country the supply exceeds the demand, and quoted, disapprovingly to be sure, the remark of a home-mission secretary, that "our seminaries next autumn ought to refuse to take any new men." The gravity of the situation is quite apparent without further argument when the officer of a society which has hitherto clamored unceasingly for men low-salaried and hard-worked, calls a halt on the line of supply. And the result of overcrowding lowers manhood, cheapens the profession, shortens terms of pastoral tenure, encourages fickleness on the part of the churches, and reduces to veriest commercialism the barterings between candidates and churches. Indeed, the commercial basis of modern church life is one of the most discouraging tendencies of our time.

Now it will not do to urge the customary pleas in extenuation of such conditions. It is urged, for instance, that seminary students find little difficulty in obtaining places upon graduation. This we may accept as a fairly correct statement,

and for the following reasons: As a rule such graduates are unmarried, and they can well afford to be content with a meagre salary for the sake of a position somewhere. Moreover, the craze for neophytes in the ministry is a marked feature of all denominational life. But with multiplying years value often diminishes. The real pinch of ministerial tenure comes with the first gray hairs, and not long ago a writer in a certain religious journal contended that the age of forty—a period when, according to Mr. Beecher, a man has fairly learned to employ skilfully the tools of his profession—establishes the clerical dead-line. This may be a somewhat rash assertion, but if one will take the trouble to note the ages of men "called" to various churches, I venture to say there will be comparatively few beyond the age of fifty. Truly this may be the fault of the men themselves. They may have ceased to grow mentally, and are possibly indifferent to fresh methods of parish development. But we are facing a condition, not a theory; and the condition is that the young fellow just out of the Divinity School, although placed at first, is extremely likely to remain unplaced in middle life, if for any reason he resigns one charge without another in prospect; and this with a grown-up

family dependent on his salary. The woods are full of the unemployed. A contributor to the *Evangelist* states the truth with chilling frankness when he says: "Congregations are unwilling to call a preacher who is up in years because they dislike to freeze him out in his old age and there is no other way of getting rid of him." Therefore, the usual seminary plea that its students find a parish fails of pertinency when urged as an argument against the growing and widespread conviction that the ministry is overcrowded. Is it strange that the note of alarm is being raised in the midst of all the sentimental gush about the crying need of clergymen?

But we are told again that the pressure is greatest in New England and New York, and that the unholy scramble is chiefly for the more desirable pulpits. This is partially true and partially false. There are relatively as many applicants for an obscure, poorly salaried parish as for a prominent field. Even if this were not so, the undue pressure in the quarters named establishes nothing favorable in regard to the general situation. If educational societies that make an easy way into the ministry have raised up hundreds of men who are determined to settle East or nowhere, so much the worse for a system that encourages

the cultivation of a spirit quite the reverse of the spirit inculcated in the Pauline maxim, that the good soldier of Christ "must endure hardness." Moreover, who will vouch for a state in the Union where the hue and cry after vacant pulpits is not formidably resonant? Who will name a pastorless church, East or West, that is not besieged?

The seminary professor will probably contend that the Websterian doctrine of "room higher up" is applicable to the situation described. Then let him at once put into practice the suggestion of the *Congregationalist,* expressed in the following editorial words: "One source of relief in this ministerial problem must come from greater discrimination on the part of the seminaries. The desire to have large classes sometimes leads to the admission of men who would better be doing something else than preparing for the Christian ministry. Our seminaries surely have their share of responsibility in helping to abate the distress now arising from an overcrowded ministry." Exactly so. If financial aid in the form of Educational Society gratuities must be given, let the recipients be picked men of exceptional calibre. Such a policy would depopulate the ranks of ministerial candidates with an execution

little sort of frightful. And let also the seminaries imitate Harvard Divinity School, which makes the cost of a theological education, in the matter of tuition, precisely the same as in the academical department. The whole seminary and Educational Society assumption that because men are grievously needed in the ministry they must therefore be encouraged by gratuities is absurdly wide of the mark in the light of present facts.

In theory, the ministry is a fair and inviting field to able and consecrated young men. That theory, under such conditions as are easily conceived and with a sufficient number of brainy and devoted recruits to fill the gaps made by death and debility, is wholly tenable. Under existing conditions the experience of hundreds who set sail upon the ocean of ministerial opportunity, only to return to port in middle life sadly battered and torn, repels the assumption. The remorseless competition for places; the wire-pulling and pipe-laying merely to get a hearing in a vacant pulpit; the chance of being set aside in the full vigor of maturity; the alarming growth of short-term pastorates; the fact that men of decided ability sometimes wait four years for employment; the reluctant conviction that influence and

a "pull" will do for a man in the ministry precisely what such factors will accomplish in politics—all these considerations are powerful make-weights in turning the attention of high-minded young men to other pursuits. Is it any wonder that out of a class of 275 at Yale—the educational stronghold of New England Congregationalism—only five study theology? The baneful conditions which underlie much of our modern church life already begin to tell as deterrent forces, and the "Society for the Decrease of the Ministry" in the next few years will have its work promoted and encouraged by an increasing dearth of theological students. The chief concern of the writer is to exhibit unflinchingly the actual status of the clergy, the unhappy position in which so many worthy ministers find themselves for reasons just now urged. And the burden of any reply must logically involve a sweeping denial of the premises upon which these conclusions are founded. . The writer would be grateful indeed if a more optimistic view of the ministry could be vindicated. But something more than sentiment and religious tradition will be required to dispose of the cold and repellent facts already adduced.

It may be said, as the final word from the

writer's point of view, that the young man now contemplating the ministry as his life-work ought, in justice to himself, to consider thoroughly three questions:

(1) Am I willing to face such momentous and disheartening possibilities for the sake of preaching the gospel just as long as God permits?

(2) Is it right for me to marry and bring into the world a family when, according to the doctrine of present ministerial chances, I may be stranded at fifty, with scarcely a hope of reëntrance upon my work?

(3) Am I ready to preach wherever a church is needed, for a time without pay or social privileges or advantages. in preference to accepting a call to some old hulk of an organization, politely named a Christian church, but which ought decently to die, having outlived its usefulness, and only endures because a few wealthy families pay the bills?

The celibacy of the clergy, unless there be independent means of support, and the capacity to meet cheerfully great personal hardship, are two prime qualifications of mininsterial candidature in the present distressing state of the ministerial market. When conditions improve—if they ever do—one may return to the traditional

view of the clerical profession, and include marriage as a relation to be safely entered into without confronting a most appalling state of affairs when middle-life is spent!

CHAPTER II.

THE CAPTURE OF THE CHURCH BY COMMERCIALISM.

In this chapter the writer proposes to establish the existence of conditions in the church of to-day whose ominous and menacing nature justifies the boldest utterance, conditions that still further emphasize the gist of his earlier thesis that men should be turned from the ministry rather than induced to enter it, unless, indeed, theological neophytes are imbued with the martyr-spirit that does not flinch under the startling interrogatory of the Rev. Dr. Watson—"Should Old Ministers be Shot?" And in this general survey one or more points must be broadly stated in general terms as basic material for what follows.

On every lip to-day, where broad philosophical interpretation of church life flashes intelligent message to the brain, there trembles the question, "What is the matter with the church?" It is not a new cry. Both Erasmus and Sir Thomas

More in their time declared that "without a root and branch alteration of the forces and tendencies making from the heart of the church, catastrophe is not far off." But that cry in the present is stupendously reënforced by such predominance of the material over the spiritual in church relations as to warrant the assumption that the capture of the church by commercialism is now the supreme cause of its gasping, hand-to-mouth spiritual existence. And the impending "castastrophe" is not that of the wild torrent, sweeping all to sudden ruin, but rather the action of a slow, malignant poison chilling the blood, while the bloom of apparent health yet lingers on the cheek of the victim.

President Hadley, of Yale, once said in a *Forum* article: "It is easier to preach ideals than to look facts squarely in the face." Even so. And the facts which result from this conquest, as I shall explain in my next chapter, are so contrary to the primal instinct and purpose of the church of the living God as to weaken its power, cheapen its prerogative, jeopardize its influence, and banish the spirit of Jesus from its councils. What sadder spectacle could be witnessed in the light of history?

And, definitely, by commercialism is meant

this: It is the privilege of the church to rise above the prevailing note of its environment. This is the only sane condition of all progress. In the days of Luther that environment was one of extreme and far-reaching corruption. So testifies Sir Thomas More, a devout Catholic. But the church rose above it! In the Wesleyan period, the church struggled to breathe in an atmosphere of vast indifference and sloth. But the church rose above it! To-day, the note of its environment is a species of industrialism, which, as King Lear said of the boisterous night, "pities neither wise men nor fools," forcing the weakest to the wall, ringing the changes upon money as the "be-all and end-all" of existence, gauging human merit by its gold-winning capacity, precipitating into literature what the *Saturday Review* terms the "cash author," painting for the vulgar rich man in daub and splash what he pays for by the yard. So this industrialism grinds under the "iron heel of necessity," to quote Ricardo, the fairest and sweetest flowers of ethereal life and hope. Does the church rise above such environment?

In some instances we must answer yes; in the main current of its endeavors, no. With the great majority of churches, at least of Protestant

faith, the financial question is ever uppermost. And if the chief end of man is to "glorify God," as the old catechism hath it, the chief end of thousands of churches is to meet a culpable extravagance in expenditure, so as to turn the year with a three-thousand-dollar "crack quartet" paid to date, even though the heavenly record-book of sinners saved writes not a soul to the credit account. And if one notes carefully the methods of churches, especially those of the fashionable type, one must quickly discern that the plate-glass-show-window-brown-stone-front aspect of things is always foremost. This necessitates also what is popularly known as a "hustler" in the pulpit, if the vulgarism may be pardoned, in order that high-priced pews may be filled to meet the bills. According to the Rev. Dr. Faunce, who ought to know, modern churchgoers "admire the hustler more than the Prophet," and the "rub-a-dub-dub" style of pulpit oratory, to borrow a phrase from Webster, that "smites the sins of the Egyptians four thousand years ago, or the immoralities of Paris four thousand miles away," is vastly more palatable than fearless exposure of the worldliness of the sleek and sleepy hearer in the pew.

Felix Adler said recently, "Our whole society

is infiltrated with the money-getting idea." The church is capable of soaring above this incubus. Does it? How *can* it when pastor and committee are too often involved in the "vicious circle" of ideas relative to the maintenance of a position in the competitive church race, where lavish and unwise expenditure perpetuates debt, and debt locks fast the immortal truths of the spiritual life in the iron jaws of a commercial church necessity? Why again? Because commercialism, utterly destitute of spiritual conceptions, and, in its place, rightfully obedient to a natural law of procedure, as certainly as the procession of the planets, usurps the sphere which should be devoted to Christly ideals, and controls the measures and methods of the church by a foreign and alien law wholly opposed to the teaching of its Head. Precisely how this law works will be seen later. Sufficient now to establish the thesis, referring proofs to the orderly sequence of these chapters.

Now it will not answer to affirm that the church of the present is doing much for humanity in the aggregate. That the sum of her activities is a potent factor in the world's progress is conceded. But it is not alone a question of *how much*— it is a question of *how much commensurate with her* vast wealth, her vast constituency, her vast

tradition, and the vast body of the Christian consciousness of the centuries. An equally astonishing fund of resources in business, thoroughly utilized, could make every wilderness to blossom as the rose, enlarge every fortune to tenfold dimensions, and lift every industrial enterprise to heights of colossal amplitude. A giant, because of his strength, might do many deeds of helpfulness to the weak; but if a giant exerted only a tithe of his potential strength because he chose to pamper and overfeed his body, his altruism would be only a small draft on the bank of his resources! Why, then, does the church, with comparative feebleness of effort, distribute her historic beneficence in rills when her power should be raised to the exhaustless energy of an ocean tide?

To-day opportunity stands at the door of the church like a courier ready to be off on heavenly mission. To-day the world is waiting as never before, with almost panting expectancy, the unfolding of that consummate flower and fruit of all civilization that endures, the pure religion of Jesus whose vine was planted in the fertile fields of Palestine in the long ago. To-day, as never before, man is studied both in his individuality and in his relations, and not merely as a unit or

pivot in some dry-as-dust economic scheme. To-day, the conception of fraternity—which, as Frederick Maurice said, cannot exist "without the conception of a common Father"—is growing stronger outside the church, and barely holding its own within the church. Why does the church so feebly responds to voices calling her importunately to higher motive and more unselfish endeavor? Is it because commercialism has made of her cohorts a species of "bourgeoise aristocracy"? Is it because her vigor falters with the growth of her wealth, and the palsy of indifference seizes upon her vital forces through the chilling of her heart and life?

These are questions that must be bravely met. Here and there a solitary pulpit flings back a courageous challenge to such dominant commercialism. But, as a rule, the traditional defender of the church as it is goes off on erratic tangent and pipes upon his wheezy reed the plaint of false doctrine as responsible for prevailing conditions, or sighs lugubriously through his instrument that "mere worldlings" in church membership, forsaking the prayer-meeting for the theatre, undermine the citadel of faith! Such pipings are but the wasted breath from feeble lungs. The causes of churchly decline are deeper, dead-

lier, darker. They inhere in the very bones of that dry-rot of arid commercialism which unless overcome writes "Ichabod" upon the walls of the church.

Froude declared, "In my day the knotty problems of theology are evaded." Froude would not say this were he living now. He *might say* the problem of the comparative failure of the church to live up to the unequalled grandeur of her opportunity is met by dissertations on the errors of Unitarians, the necessity of pounds and shillings to keep the ark of Jehovah from toppling over, the need of emotional revivals, and the awful contingency that must be faced if some "Boss" Platt of finance should take offence at pungent preaching, and leave a ghastly, staring hole of deficit in the bottomless well of lavish churchly expenditure. And in saying this the reincarnated Froude would wing his shaft in painful proximity to the bull's-eye of the target! And keen observers of our time, unbiased enough to see things as they are, and not as they are popularly supposed to be, are not disinclined to this opinion. In future chapters some apparently unrelated facts may be charged home to this source.

CHAPTER III.

SOME PRACTICAL RESULTS OF COMMERCIALISM.

In a previous chapter the writer sought to establish the fact of commercialism as a persistently dominating influence in the church life of to-day. This commercialism was described as "bar sinister" to all the high and holy ends the church is capable of achieving. It now remains to point out in this and succeeding essays some specific consequences flowing from such absorption. And the first inevitable result is to perpetuate church organizations which should have died long ago, although it must be admitted that the interment would be difficult, since nature provides for the burial of everything under heaven but a dead church!

A distinguished and courageous orthodox minister caustically observed a few years since, "We all know personally many churches that are social, financial, and religious impertinences." Riotous indulgence in the forlorn mazes of statis-

tics brings excusable shuddering to the average reader; but a single fact may be urged as significant. In the one hundred thousand churches of five denominations, according to this authority, twenty-five thousand are wholly unnecessary. Therefore they may truly be termed "impertinences." Why, then, are they kept alive? Simply because the principle of *combination,* now the advancing note of the business world, is entirely subordinate to the principle of *competition* in the religious field. And the strange feature is, that business men who readily combine to avoid loss in commercial relations, insist on the competitive principle applied to church relations. And the reason is that pride of appearances, honeycombing society with reckless expenditure, whose end is bankruptcy, carried over into the church, prefers an empty hulk concealing a handful of worshippers, selected, to a people's church, gregarious and democratic, where enthusiasm burns and the manifold godly labors abound. And this because a stronger Jew or Gentile congregation will occupy that particular corner if the empty hulk "gives up the ghost," and one star additional, albeit a waning star, is forced from the diadem of denominational pride! In other words, the distinct commercial principle, "what your rival wants

he must not have," holds a congregation of fossilized money-bags to the hulk lest some other body, numerically more affluent, *do* where this particular assemblage *dies!* This may be Christianity, but to the unprejudiced mind it looks suspiciously like senile church dementia. And the "hulk church"—whose name is legion—is one of the most depressing signs of the survival of the ecclesiastically unfit.

Now from this corollary proceeds another result which may be called deputized salvation, accomplished by means of the branch store church, since we are mixing commercialism and religion. If the empty shell of a once prosperous church is left high and dry in the unfashionable down-town quarter, what means are taken to revivify its spent forces? Will the methods of work and organization be altered to meet new conditions, as in St. George's under Dr. Rainsford's democratic and skilful leadership? Rarely. The church of this type changes its spots as sparingly as the leopard. It votes to move up town, flings out the bait of a costly structure placarded "debt," and possibly close by some other marble structure on the down grade, bids for a famous pulpit "hummer," as a trustee once phrased it, and throws a sop to conscience by raising the homely walls of a mission

chapel! People have not gone from those regions; they have come and are coming faster. And people in fustian jackets are as susceptible to heart-to-heart talks and pleading earnestness of genuine brotherhood of soul as when Jesus taught. But to avoid the upper millstone of browsing west side goats and the lower millstone of swarming tenements, that church plumps itself where shekels are most likely to flow into its coffers. And the chapel, the branch store of the main enterprise, is left to show that gospel by deputy is still conceded.

When police stations are built they are located at strategic points. Even Tammany, vile, but rarely stupid, avoids congesting its station-house depots of supply for impecunious braves. It remains for churches in great cities to pursue a policy of congestion. Jesus said, "Go, go to highways and hedges, to fields white for harvest." He did *not* say, "Keep out of the wet of adverse commercial conditions for large pew rentals by running up town for shelter!" The present drift of well-to-do church life adopts a commercial principle of personal ease and comfort. The divine law is one of concentration of effort by diffusion of opportunities. It has regard mainly for the spot where the light of the divine truth

is most needed. The church of the first Christian century, conducted on the plan of a vast amount of church life in large cities to-day, would have broken the heart of St. Paul, stirred the rage of impetuous St. Peter, and forced indignant protest even from the gentle lips of St. John.

But this is not the worst of commercialism at the heart of the church. It also cheapens and demoralizes the clergy. The writer holds in high regard his brother ministers. He appreciates their position, and is the recipient of their confidences, which often reveal a soul-bitterness little dreamed of by congregations. But it is as certain as anything can be that the clergy must become a class of moral giants in order successfully to cope with the ignominious and depressing commercial environment that slows and chills the once divinely rich, warm currents of churchly function. Upon every side the clergyman hears "policy and caution" emphasized as the conditions of his tenure. Is he told in the seminary to be as bold as Isaiah, as fearless as Jeremiah, as outspoken as John the Baptist? The writer never heard these admonitions in a three years' course. It is the same old story everywhere of the inevitable deficit, the inevitable wealthy few who make it up, the inevitable need of not offending

those who keep the ship afloat. Most men, even of superb integrity of purpose, must possess the iron strength of Savonarola to resist the pressure, and under the self-delusion of "policy and caution" lips are locked on questions of social and industrial reform, where the gospel message is clear as crystal, because commercial and not spiritual values warp the church from the plain pathway of practical righteousness. This may be pessimistic; it may be disturbing; but, with exceptions which he notes, it is the average man's summary of existing conditions. And if the utterance be treasonable, as most utterances are when opposed to tradition, such treason gains support from many a secular unbiased newspaper column, as witness these words from a recent issue of the *Evening Post:* "The churches have a terrible responsibility in this matter (that of recognizing or tolerating political corruptionists). Who does not remember Presbyterians coquetting with Jay Gould? What Protestant church in this city would refuse a present of $50,000 from Platt? What Catholic church would turn on Croker?" And, it may be added, how many clergymen would dare insist that any political corruptionist should be expelled from membership, or that no seminaries of which they

are trustees should receive a dollar won by bribes and railway wrecking, or that no church which they serve as pastor should receive at communion a worshipper known to have built his fortune on the blood and bones of men he has ruined, without a restoration fourfold as a proof of penitence? Verily, if a certain type of a dominant commercialism is permitted to draw the water of life through the foul and encrusted tubes of its own profligacy, what of the future of the church of God?

Say what we will, a flexible morality, predicated of the church, is worse than the "scarlet woman" at her heels. To grant that she may tolerate for one instant a double standard is to sign the death-warrant of her usefulness. And the whole disastrous effect of making her line of conduct and method commercial in place of spiritual may be summed up in a sentence: The heritage of her immutable glory and surpassing truth is frayed out into the thin air of expediency to gain a temporary end.

Expediency is the rock on which too often the conscience of the church has been wrecked. It is the duty of the church to answer the question what is ethical and true and just in the light of

the teaching of its Founder; it has no more right to inquire what is expedient when moral problems press for solution than it has to post a ribbon of stock quotations at the portals of the sanctuary. And if the ethics of the New Testament, in the germ, are not broad enough to cover every phase of human effort, from that included in the maxim of Louis Blanc, "Every morally legitimate business is tested in proportion as it performs a social service," to the development of what George Saintsbury calls "erotimania" in literature, then the ethical teaching of Jesus fails of that completeness inseparable from the world-conception of His divine authority. Orthodox defence and heterdox tinkering are but incidents in the sweep of truth. Theology conforms to no organic law of survival. But ethics, spiritualized by Christly inspiration, constitute the one unvarying stream of tendency on which men must launch the bark of self-hood.

Now, commercialism at the heart of the church renders the method of the organization distinctly unethical. This, in turn, elevates the doctrine of expediency to a "bad eminence." And the result is that Churchianity—not Christianity—is again on trial, and at a period when the church

should have vindicated triumphantly and overwhelmingly its holy and benign mission. Whether the church is actually declining must be left for further consideration.

CHAPTER IV.

IS THE CHURCH LOSING GROUND?

In two preceding chapters of this series the writer endeavored to show, first, that the church, broadly speaking, has been captured by commercialism; and, second, that the results of such conquest are most disastrous to pulpit and pew. A natural inference from the foregoing would be that the church is losing ground in the community. That inference he accepts without hesitation as well founded. But at the very beginning of the discussion let us dismiss the merely *statistical* aspect of the case as of slight importance. The easiest of all argumentative prey is the man who opens his debate by exclaiming with a flourish, "Statistics show!" Show what? Generally what the disputant has pre-determined in his own mind as the truth of the matter. Montaigne said of words, "Words are vascular; cut them and they will bleed." Statistics never bleed! They dry up and wither under the blows of the battle-

door and shuttlecock game which contestants play with their significance.

From the present point of view it is not in the least pertinent to inquire whether Dr. Carroll, or Dr. Dorchester, or any other able churchly statistician has made out a triumphant case of religious progress by the simple process of proving the increase of membership rolls. Nor is the writer much impressed by Dr. Carson's dismal figures informing us that in the "City of Churches" 600,000 are non-attendants, while out of 80,000 "new Brooklynites" added to the population in a year only 5,000 became church members. He rejects the assumption, based on these figures, that prevailing conditions are "absolutely appalling." The kingdom of God is larger, grander, nobler than the church, whose only creed should be friendship with God, with all its implications. If the kingdom grows the church will round to its task as the complement of the kingdom in good time. And the very conditions described as "appalling" have an optimistic edge contributing to this very result, as will be seen later on.

Both Dr. Carroll and Dr. Carson, as statisticians, touch only the outer rim of the question of churchly growth or decline. The *real* status of

a religious body, comprising few or many, is determined by the quality of the work done, the consecration and devotion of its membership, the purpose of the organization as demonstrated by fruitage, and by the trend of the inner spiritual life as gauged by a certain adaptability in meeting the spiritual needs of the age and hour. The counting of additional heads in church membership—say a million more in a decade—proves nothing of value unless such accretion means commensurate development of power, energy, vitality, usefulness, and high regard in the community. There has always been and always will be the true leaven of a Christly church within the hollow shell of a worldly church. And the measure of the leaven is the measure of the condition of the church. It is quite conceiveable that the church may be bigger numerically by far than fifty years ago, and still it may be steadily losing ground as the representative of Jesus Christ on the earth. And that is precisely what the writer means by the initial question of this paper.

Now it is a singular fact that with all this statistical flourish of trumpets the volume of complaints concerning the condition of the church spiritually was never more strenuous than to-day. We put aside the average wage-earner's estimate

of the organization, although keen students of social problems are not surprised that he should cheer the name of Jesus and hiss at the mention of the church. That organization means to him in its totality simply ecclesiasticism in purple and fine robes. But putting this aside, what says her own ministry? One might fill columns with testimony. The Methodist clergymen of New York, apropos of a report by Miss Helen F. Clark on the spiritual condition of the city, affirm: "Your committee is at a loss to know what to recommend for the relief of such frightful ignorance and depravity in the heart of our *boasted* Christian civilization—something more ought to be done to lift this awful pall that hangs over us." (Is New York worse than Chicago, London, and other great cities where the church possesses almost fabulous wealth?) Dr. Rainsford writes: "The church is not fitting herself to new conditions. The people don't want her because down in her heart she don't want them." (Does the census roll of increased membership meet such indictment?) Dr. Hillis declares: "I know many men who never attend church and who are the best men in their communities." (Shall we say such men *would go* if the church met the demands of all honest ethical inquiry

fearlessly and ably?) The late Dr. McGlynn, true priest of God, solemnly averred, "Religion is losing its hold upon men." (If the church were religious to the core and taught Christ's Christianity in its glorious completeness, could such loss be minimized?) Dr. Rylance refers to "ecclesiastical decadence." (By such decadence does he really mean the growth of frills and forms for the purpose of concealing a spiritual void, or does he mean what the *Saturday Review* terms "religious decomposition" within the venerable walls of an outwardly imposing structure?

Are we to say, then, that such utterances and many of a similar tenor are symptomatic? And symptomatic of what? Of the general and uneasy consciousness in the minds of multitudes that the church is losing her grip? Do the facts warrant the apprehension? If the church *had* kept her grip in great cities—as by the law of her divine constitution she was bound to do—would the deliverance of the Methodist ministers be possible? Would the church of the first Christian century, puny, weak, faltering, by numerical and wealth comparison, be liable to just indictment on this account, given the same conditions to overcome? With the enrichment of her members, the elevation of her place in the social

scale, the enlargement of her fashionable clientele, there has come a corresponding diminution of her zeal and capacity for sacrifice. And the rising numerical inflection only adds to the burden of just condemnation. And if numbers be accepted as the test of spiritual prosperity it would follow that when the Church of Rome was all-dominant and all-compelling at the time of the Protestant Reformation she would be at the very acme of her spiritual strength and purity. Exactly the reverse of this proposition is true!

It would be rank folly to estimate the capacity and fitness of an army by "paper tests" of strength. What concerns the general in command is to know how many are "present for duty." It signifies very little that in a population of 62,000,000 in 1890, 23,000,000 in round numbers are communicants. What proportion can be relied on to report "present for duty" at any cost of personal ease and luxury? It is within the truth to say that legions of church members rarely or never go; many who attend evince small interest in the services. A distinguished jurist, the pillar of an orthodox congregation, said to the writer: "I suppose in the course of my life I have heard thousands of sermons, but most of them trickle in at one ear and

out at the other." In sparsely settled communities, where church-going is looked upon as a badge of social standing, many attend service because they are expected to, but as contributors to religious vitality they are of no more use than the fifth wheel of a coach. And in large cities there is one universal complaint of falling off in church attendance. A former New York pastor of wide experience remarked: "I find a woeful lack of earnest Christianity. The class of indifferentists grows daily. Costly temples are not half filled." Such is the almost universal impression. And when church life is reduced to the dimensions of a social function, a function that includes a pew as an ethical asset, just as an opera-box goes in under the head of recreation asset, one may reasonably inquire: "Is the church losing ground?"

One of the healthful signs of the period in the religious field is a growing disposition to seek honestly the causes for this decline. One puts the blame upon preachers; another upon advanced thought in theology; a third upon commercialism in pews, as in anti-slavery days when "cotton in the pews" blinded the eyes of worshippers to the plight of the fugitive bondman, fleeing by the glow of the blazing North Star

to some far-off Canaan of refuge. But it is the startling fact which most concerns us. And to the clear-eyed, unprejudiced observer, unable to submit meekly to statistical bluff, there arises against his will the overwhelming conviction that the church is declining in those elements of power that promote her spiritual well-being. And this impression could not be so widespread unless supported by tangible evidence. In the nature of the case, as already pointed out, such evidence is anything but statistical. Given these conditions, what follows? Worship reduced by many to a purely social function; vast increase of wealth by church members, resulting in pitiful relative increase of benevolent offerings; loss of spiritual vitality, induced by pressure of materialistic ideas and motives; the average man's conviction that the church is slighting her opportunity; complete silence of prominent pulpits on the real bone-and-sinew ethical problems of our time; the suggestion of countless remedies from every quarter to cure the existing evil—what conclusion must be arrived at from such premises? There is but one, namely, that the church yields inch by inch to the tide.

It is to be said, however, that this conclusion is not necessarily pessimistic. Shall we forget our

Speilhagen, "Through night to light?" Shall we forget that the pendulum of all progress towards better things perpetually oscillates between action and reaction, and that onward and backward movements surge and resurge upon the arena of the contending world forces? The church will one day live again in the splendor of a benign and lofty purpose, but it will be a church "redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled" from conditions which belong to a dominant commercialism, a commercialism giving way ultimately to more ethical environment. The church of the future must be evolved from the storm and stress of its present vicious entanglement with "beggarly elements," and then it will live, as Emerson writes, "for thoughts and ideas imperishable."

"The hour is coming when men's holy Church
Shall melt away in ever-widening walls,
And be for all mankind; and in its place
A mightier Church shall come, whose covenant
Shall be the deeds of love."

And this fond hope continually cheers the heart of every patient and troubled watcher upon the walls of Zion.

CHAPTER V.

THE RELATION WHICH NEW THEOLOGY SUSTAINS TO EXISTING CHURCH CONDITIONS.

THREE preliminary chapters in the series on the modern church have cleared the way for special mention of particular phases of life and doctrine relevant to existing conditions. And it is but natural to consider, first of all, the claim so often put forth that new theology is largely responsible for the "downward tendency" in the church of to-day. Dr. Carson, a Presbyterian, to whom reference has been made, attributes the decline in church-going, in part at least, to the alleged predominant factor of pulpit discussion of the higher criticism. And the New York *Sun* voices the opinions of multitudes of honest church-folk when it propounds the following conundrum: "With Presbyterian theological seminaries denying the infallibility of the Bible, and Congregational ministers like Dr. Lyman Abbott preaching that biblical miracles are not believable because

they conflict with natural laws, how can the faith of the churches be kept warm and vital?" Such affirmations must be reckoned with. As a rule, they are quite sincere and often disclose a real sadness of heart lest the utterance of a noted Unitarian divine should prove true—"when evolution comes in by the door Calvinism goes out by the window!"

Now, to the mind of the writer the sooner Calvinism finds any agreeable mode of exit from the church, door, window, roof, or keyhole, the better for the organization. The hiatus between Calvinism and the teaching of Jesus is so wide that the longest suspension bridge of skilfully articulated theological constructiveness wholly fails to cover it. But this is neither here nor there. The question is, in what measure, if any, is the new theology (so called) responsible for the unhappy conditions of church life already pointed out? To what extent is the higher criticism, with its corrollaries and implications, chargeable with decline of religious zeal and paucity of religious endeavor? It would be altogether practicable, from the progressive theologian's point of view, to answer these questions by "carrying the war into Africa." That is, by holding a dogmatic and unenlightened pulpit conservatism responsible for

the drift away from the church. The New York *Tribune* recently hinted editorially that the non-recognition of liberalism as a tolerated school of thought in the church might lead to wholesale defection. What must be the effect upon the minds of rational thinkers when clergymen teach that any man who accepts the testimony of geology against the six days' creation story in Genesis is an infidel? Is it strange that a Christian mother writes to a religious weekly pleading for an "expurgated edition" of the Bible when a conservative clergyman proclaims that the ancient Jews did right, because the inspired Scriptures commended the deed, in ruthlessly slaughtering helpless women and children?

A thoughtful member of the Church of Rome lately expressed to the writer his disgust and apprehension in view of the action of Cardinal Vaughn against the eminent scientist, St. George Mivart, for daring to suggest that the Bible might not be impeccable in scientific content. Are there not many in the Church of Rome, both devout and intelligent, who must deplore the course of this prelate as calculated to diminish the regard in which the great historic church is held? Personally, the writer is of the opinion that if the argument were to proceed on these

lines a good case would lie in the Court of Reason against extreme conservative teaching in theology as the cause of the admitted alienation of masses of reading men and women from the church. But we are not to press an indictment just now; rather must we meet an indictment, as already stated. And it is met by denying explicitly the allegation framed by Dr. Carson, *et al.*

Let us see, for a moment, what the new theology—purely a term of convenience—really is. To begin with, it is not new. The germs of present-day liberal doctrine are interwoven with the warp and woof of all church history. They are as old and older than the time of Gregory of Nazianzen. True, these conceptions have been steadily defeated at notable church councils, but only by the summary process of "counting noses." And shall we say that because majority votes have inclined in one direction for centuries, they will *always* incline that way? And, at the very least, these conceptions have done good service in clearing up obscurities. That well-known representative German theologian, J. A. Dorner, admits that even Deism, "by clearing away dead matter, paved the way for reconstruction of theology." People debate higher

criticism as if it were a modern innovation. But higher criticism goes back to the last century. Witness the work of Alexander Geddes, and forthwith Roman Catholics and Protestants opened their batteries upon him, long before Kuenen was heard of.

To-day the sum and substance of New Theology is simply this: It is a scholarly and brave endeavor to gather up all that is ethically and spiritually sound in Scripture, and to separate it from the chaff of ecclesiastical accretion; it is a sublime effort to make secure the foundations of faith in God and man by insisting upon the self-revelation of the Divine immanence in every human soul; it is the sloughing off of the incidental and transitory phases of thought from the body of Christian theology, in order to unfold more clearly the matchless supremacy of Jesus; it means the final upbuilding of a larger element of rational Christian faith upon the ruins of divers petty theological schemes, whose genesis is scriptural only in the sense that an arbitrary collocation of isolated texts usurps the place of immutable truth. The liberal party in the church —even the most advanced wing—seeks to free the life of the soul by cutting away the impedimenta of theological abstractions, thus bringing

the soul back to its first and noblest contemplation, the love of God in Jesus Christ.

Now, on this view of the case, there is no logic or reason behind the plea that advancing religious thought works to the spiritual disadvantage of the church. No great truth, dear to the heart of intelligent faith, and useful in promoting the flow of spiritual forces in religion, is jeopardized by the labors of a Wellhausen or a Briggs. To affirm the contrary is to deny, in effect, the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount. The real infidelity of the period is that infidelity which binds the church to commercialism, saps her strength by inconsistency of life, elevates to a position of vital importance a mere doctrinal tenet, always in dispute. Infidelity is lack of fidelity to that measure of truth a man accepts. And the actual deterrent to church attendance—next to causes mentioned—is the cold and unpalatable fact that the church is indifferent to the ethical conceptions on which her progress depends. The Rev. Graham Taylor, D.D., of Chicago Seminary, never uttered a more incisive word than this: "The conscience of Christendom will not much longer tolerate the profession of belief in Christian altruism as a rule of practice, while life itself is maintained by

conformity to the diametrically opposite principle of every man for himself." Here is the most potent initial cause of all the evils which now militate against the prosperity of the church. As broad-minded and glorious Phillips Brooks once declared: "It is not *opportunity* men want; it is *fire*." And fire—the heat of spiritual fervor—is no more certainly an orthodox than it is a heterodox possession.

Let us bring the whole matter to a simple concrete test. It is said in many ultra-conservative quarters that a New Theology, casting vigorous doubts upon the doctrine of eternal retribution, diminishes church attendance and weakens personal concern in religious affairs. Now what is the consensus of opinion to-day as to the value of emotional revivals of religion? Is it not that such revivals are mostly pernicious? But under such conditions only is the dogma of an endless hell bellowed forth with noisy insistence, and generally by men of the type of a Brooklyn evangelist, now mercifully taken from us, who so recently repelled all fair-minded people by his slanderous eloquence. The crowds were drawn? Of course they were—out of pure curiosity. So crowds were drawn to see the bone of a mammoth on duty as the thigh-bone of St. Christopher.

The most discreditable thing about an emotional revival is the crowded attendance in an age of development by Christian nurture. Numbers, then, cannot be predicated as proof of prosperity in Zion. A crowded auditorium may not be half so significant of growth in religion as a small, perhaps thinly attended church, working quietly, steadily, unobtrusively. We greatly doubt if concern for making the most of one's self, spiritually, is nearly as pronounced where eternal retribution is vociferously preached as it is where the law of the spirit life is unfolded step by step in all its gracious beauty. Men are thus made ashamed of spiritual poverty. The lack of personal concern in religion is quite as obvious among the stiffest Presbyterian churches in New York City as it is where liberal congregations assemble. If the crippling of the doctrine of eternal punishment is the cause of religious decline, it should follow that where the tenet is stoutly maintained, church life must throb at fullest tension. Such is not the fact, as may easily be proved from the lips of unwilling witnesses.

We repeat, then, that New Theology as outlined is not a hindrance, but a help, to the church; not a bar to the progress, but a gateway. But for the development of broader views

in religion, alienation from church attendance would be still more marked. Liberalism will ultimately be recognized as a sheet-anchor holding the church to her moorings in the minds of the thoughtful. The solution of the existing problems of practical church undertaking lies deeper than orthodoxy or heterodoxy. The remedy is not doctrinal; neither is it discovered in the appeal to history. That remedy is linked with social, industrial, economic, and psychological movements whose development under the law of the "pain of progress" acts and reacts immediately and powerfully upon the life of the church. Groping mortals are now permitted to behold only foregleams of light upon the horizon. What that light means as interpreted by the writer must be reserved for further statement.

CHAPTER VI.

THE OBTUSENESS OF THE CHURCH TO CHANGED CONDITIONS.

In any discussion of the causes which contribute to the unsatisfactory state of affairs in the church of to-day, as protrayed in these essays, we must not overlook her own want of perspicacity in failing to interpret correctly "the signs of the times." Her obtuseness in regard to the changed and changing circumstances of her environment reacts unfavorably upon the conditions which alone give impulse to every form of progress. The indispensable requisite to onward movements of every description is adaptability. And by adaptability I mean the adjustment of the life and purpose of an organization to the new conditions springing up in a new age. This may be affected without the slightest deflection from the essential integrity of the basic truth or principle on which that organization is founded. But the application of that basic truth or principle

must conform to outward conditions inseparable from advancing civilization and ripening knowledge.

Now the prime difficulty with the Modern Church is this: It too often fails of bold, decisive, undaunted, comprehensive, and enlightened leadership in matters where the church has divine authority to act. It refuses to accept the inevitable when that inevitable is simply the point of view forced upon human understanding by the stern law of progress obedient to law. And law, as Hooker said, "finds her seat in the bosom of God." The church wastes time in debate and parley as to the course to be pursued when the only possible course is that which is made apparent by the logic of circumstances. The church, for example, has discussed in conference for twenty years, "How shall we reach the masses?" But the masses are not reached by the organization as a whole, and never will be while that organization fails to order its forms of worship and shape its methods of work so as to gain the sympathies and win the respect of wage-earners. And through the medium of three concrete illustrations I will endeavor to show how this obtuseness militates against the genius of church extension.

(1) The obtuseness of the church is obvious in the attitude maintained toward the liquor traffic. This is said with all due regard to exceptions here and there noted, as voiced by the manly and sensible utterances of Bishop Potter, Dr. Rainsford, and others. From time immemorial the average pulpit fulmination against the liquor-dealer has been violent in the extreme. I do not say the dispenser of creosote and benzine is generally a commendable personage. Undoubtedly, he is not infrequently a "shady" member of society—however welcome to the councils of St. Tammany. And the corner saloon is admittedly the pest of municipalities. But the error of the church lies in its stubborn unwillingness to see that the liquor-dealer is himself the product of conditions that make the traffic inevitable under our present industrial status. In other words, if drink is the cause of poverty, poverty, to a very great extent, is also the cause of drink. On this point there is a large and convincing array of evidence, as the writer proved in an article contributed not long ago to the New York *Independent*, in which that evidence was summarized.

What the church needs to understand is this: Her environment is less and less Arcadian and idyllic as the population of cities grows, and the

fierceness of the competitive industrial system drives with more stinging lash. Behind the saloon is the fact that until something better takes the place of the saloon, ministering to the gregarious and social instinct among the wage-earning classes, and until civilization allows wage-earners greater breathing room, the drink habit will not materially diminish. The church will not adapt itself to the wage-earners' environment because it fails to adopt the maxim of putting one's self in the other man's place. And whenever, in truth and conscience, the church has done this—as in some parts of London—we find the process of abusing the saloon-keeper gives way to the more sensible scheme of changing the environment which makes his occupation lucrative. The feverish tension of modern life so alters the aspect of every problem of civilization and morals that such problems must now be studied in altogether new relations. The Gospel is not so much fulminating powder to blow up the saloon; it is rather a principle of life that comprehends in its sweep the mitigation of every condition of unnecessary hardship whose lowest panacea is the Nirvana of drink. One model tenement-house, built on the ruins of rookeries sometimes owned by church corporations, is more tangible evidence

of the "Gospel in action" than fifty lurid sermons against the "demon of drink."

(2) But the obtuseness of the church to changed conditions is also apparent in its most unfortunate attitude toward the Sunday newspaper. The writer holds no brief for the Sunday edition of a metropolitan daily. Upon the whole, it might be well if that edition had never arrived. It has vicious features in abundance—incredibly vicious in certain quarters, features that are thoroughly reprehensible. But we must ever reckon with that keen instinct of the American mind that is never satisfied until the latest event of world-wide importance in politics, history, literature, and science is known at the earliest possible moment. That instinct is well illustrated by the remark attributed to Arnold of Rugby. Some one asked him why he read a Sunday paper. "Because," replied the great Englishman, "I wish to see how the Lord has governed the world since Saturday night!" I am stating the fact without seeking its justification. The great mass of people desire the Sunday issue, and will certainly have it. Of good or evil import, or indifferent in moral effect, it has come to stay. We hold, then, that for church associations and for individual clergymen to thunder ceaselessly against such

publication is a stupid waste of effort in seeking to overcome an accomplished fact.

Next to the attempt of a Sabbath association to legislate against bicycle riding on the first day of the week, nothing could more plainly disclose obtuseness to fixed conditions. Clearly, the influence of the church should not seek repression; rather should it seek to encourage those journals which put forth a clean, able, intelligent sheet on the Lord's day, and thus rebuke the muck and mire paraded in certain other sheets. In all other respects, if we do not exactly like a thing firmly imbedded in usage, instead of conspiring to uproot the usage, we should endeavor to improve the quality of the product. And this evolutionary process, where participated in by church people generally, may ultimately give us editions of metropolitan journals on Sunday every whit defensible. As it is there are Sunday papers containing admirable tables of contents, poems, critiques, reviews, religious summaries, and excellent stories—contents that in no wise diminish worshipful feeling, while positively quickening intellectually. And on the lowest view of the case one may venture to say that many in the church talk business, gossip at the Sunday dinner, and otherwise bear a light and trivial part who

would not admit even this edition to their homes. All religious observance is marred by painful, and, it may be added, by generally unconscious inconsistency. If the church will accept the fact of the Sunday newspaper as inevitable, and encourage the self-respecting editor, whose aim is to publish helpful and stimulating matter, free from social cesspool scum, her attitude will be consistent, dignified, and wise. The plan of indiscriminate denunciation only serves to show that she has lost the power of acute reasoning from indefeasible premises.

(3) Once more, the obtuseness of the church to changed conditions is apparent in her attitude respecting Sabbath observance. In the effort to restore the Puritan conscience—an absolutely hopeless undertaking, even if desirable—three dominant factors in present American life are ignored. First, the vast complexity and unremitting pressure of our economic and industrial status forever dissolves the New England village conception of the Sabbath. By this is meant that brain and brawn, when forced to the danger-point of exhaustion which now obtains in every realm of bread-winning toil, cannot be expected to keep Sunday as did our forbears under radically different economic conditions. The place of

worship is not diminished, but the need of wholesome recreation enlarges tenfold.

Second, the old distinction between sacred and secular, in the light of a broader conception, based on the philosophical truth of the immanence of the Deity in all that is, is gradually breaking down by virtue of its inherent unethical content. Since all days are equally sacred to the uplifting of humanity to higher planes of thought and purpose, no one day is to be dedicated to formal religious observance, except in so far as that day, by association, tradition, and custom, affords unique opportunity.

Third, the stress of this entire Sunday question, applying principally to large cities, forbids attempts to formulate rules, maxims, theories in legislation affecting social habits, without first taking into account the honest convictions of immense numbers of people belonging to nationalities other than our own. In other words, the church has no right to insist on the traditional New England interpretation of the fourth commandment, when large masses of our fellow-creatures, law-abiding and religious, according to their light, hold a different opinion of the force and scope of that commandment.

Now, the writer maintains that the majority of

movements in the church contemplating stricter Sabbath observance ignore these fundamental considerations, and are consequently abortive because inimical to common sense. Yes, and he is audacious enough to affirm inimical also to the spirit of Christ's teaching. The question of Sabbath observance depends entirely upon the point of view. There is no arbitrary enactment in Scripture which ties the church down to hard and fast conditions. Frederick W. Robertson, in his famous sermon on the opening of Sydenham Palace on Sunday, if I mistake not, cuts the ground completely from under the feet of the traditional church view, unhappily revived in the formation of certain Sabbath alliances. There is hardly an act which any given person may perform that is not likely to give offence to equally sincere and well-meaning other persons. What the church should seek is comprehensiveness of survey when it undertakes to rescue Sunday from what it deems spoliation of worship—a purpose most admirable in itself considered. But in doing this the church must not impinge upon another's right to mingle the elements of worship and recreation in such forms and proportions as may appeal to his own conscience, without interfering with the worshipful rights of others who

accentuate these elements differently. The preachers who are to fill our pulpits must be trained in larger methods of religious interpretation, both practical and spiritual, if the Sabbath question, and all other ethical problems, are to receive an interpretation in consonance with the plain facts of everyday life.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF DIVINITY SCHOOLS FOR EXISTING CHURCH CONDITIONS.

At the recent International Council of Congregational churches held in Boston, President Hyde of Bowdoin threw a lyddite shell into the conservative camp by his bold strictures upon prevailing methods of clerical education. His contention, in a word, is this: There must be a radical and costly reform in methods of seminary education. The training must be more exacting and up-to-date, for unless a man is kept alive on the living issues of the present, he will be unable to catch the living spirit from the writings of the Bible. There must also be first-hand secular knowledge, for it is useless to preach to a world whose ways of thinking one does not understand. Men must not be put back into the kindergarten or nursery by relying on dictated lectures at the expense of original personal investigation, and superfluous eleemosynary aid must cease.

Now, it is not in the least surprising that traditionalists in attendance blew out flames of mediæval wrath from indignant lips upon such opinions. What would become of scores of pious young men, nurtured on the family expectation of pulpit fame, if such audacious demands were allowed to go unrebuked? Must hermeneutics, apologetics, sacred rhetoric, Assyriology, biblical theology, and other "ologies" of ancient flavor give place to an endowed chair, whose incumbent should teach the art of getting the popular ear through knowledge of man's present needs? Must the weather-beaten signboard inscribed "Candidates for the Ministry Wanted" be removed from its niche over the seminary portal? And so the battle was immediately on, and godly warfare, the chief delight of the theologians, was precipitated. But if Dr. Hyde did not hit the nail squarely on the head, the writer will cheerfully march to the cannon's mouth of self-inculpation and be shot into shreds as a penalty for libelous utterance. He will even go further than Dr. Hyde, and say that if the theological schools for a quarter of a century back had taught the great truths of Christ's Christianity in their practical, everyday relation to the living problems of our time, many of the unhappy church conditions de-

picted in these papers would have been overcome, certainly strenuously resisted.

Some years ago the writer sat in the study of a preacher known on two continents for the breadth of his scholarship, the progressiveness of his theology, and the clearness of his vision on social problems. The conversation turned on the unethical aspect of modern civilization, and at the conclusion of the interview the preacher exclaimed in tones of lingering sadness: "When shall we have social righteousness?" I appeal to the experience of all progressive thinkers in the ministry of to-day, of twenty-five years' standing, when I inquire, how many class-room lectures were heard on the gospel of social righteousness with all its tremendous implications? And yet, if the Gospel of Jesus means anything it means this in paramount degree. The New Testament is not worth the paper on which it is printed if it does not contain the germ principles of a human society founded on equity and fraternity. But in the writer's day a divinity-school professor would have been transfixed with astonishment if, during Greek recitation, a student had ventured to ask whether the case of Dives and Lazarus was not, after all, a picture of a rotten state of human society instead of a proof text in support of the

doctrine of eternal retribution. The traditional curriculum in most seminaries of that period involved a discussion of the Logos one day, a pull at Hebrew roots another day, a tilt with Anselmic theology the third day, a wrestle with the canon, to say nothing of canons, on the fourth day, and a wind-up with sacred rhetoric in the chapel on the fifth day, when the homiletical mill ground to powder the efforts of budding neophytes and covered the remains with the fine dust of critical contumely! And on the sixth day the theologue rested from his labors—and went fishing. The whole scheme of seminary education then revolved in the orbit of the traditional, and the best Grecian or Hebraist plucked the seminary laurels.

Now it is far from the writer's purpose to decry sound learning as the ally of pulpit efficiency. He simply affirms that the awful problems of human society, whose only resolvent is the gospel in action, were prodigiously slighted, and that a three months' course of dictated lectures on the sinuosities of biblical theology might well have been surrendered to the study of man as he is in social relations. One such course of lectures as that given by the Rev. Charles W. Stubbs (now, I believe, Dean Stubbs) to his Liverpool people on "Christ and Economics"—a striking

book—would have aroused an intensity of feeling and purpose utterly foreign to the divinity student of that day, fed on Gesenius and the disputes of the fathers. And the result was that the divinity schools turned out men by hundreds who discovered that their "systems" broke down completely when confronted with the cold, hard facts of work-a-day existence. In this wonderful book on "Rome," Zola, speaking by the mouth of the Abbé Froment, declares: "An economical question is invariably hidden beneath each religious evolution." This is certainly the truth of history. But in the older days of seminary training religious questions were treated as so many theological concepts, quite separate from the struggle for bread and butter. There was little or no reference to the religion of Jesus as the fulcrum on which turned every social movement from Chartist agitation to tenement-house improvement. And men went out to preach—what? The great truths that ring from bold lips to-day in pulpits filled with the spirit of the social ethics of Jesus? No! With exceptions they went out to preach theology of the conventional type. And this theology was as incapable of reaching the deep, yearning heart of humanity as the effort of a brilliant seminary scholar I knew, who, in

addressing a congregation in a mission chapel, discoursed eloquently of the "truths, laws, and ideals of reason"!

Do we wonder, then, that existing church conditions have been perpetuated by zealous, earnest, but mistaken methods of the divinity schools? Do we wonder that the tremendous social unrest of our time has been so little understood in its religious bearings? Do we wonder that wage-earners and students of social problems generally have found the church so recreant in duty, so neglectful of opportunity? All honor to the clergy, not a few in the aggregate, who, in spite of the incubus of seminary training, have met these problems of social regeneration with a keen desire to know their solution, and when that solution is found in the slightest particular, to press home the remedy at the sacrifice of ease, luxury, and the plaudits of their fellows. And it is but fair to say that many honored instructors of the older generation, cloistered like monks in their libraries, if brought into contact with the untold miseries of social unrighteousness in a practical way, would "move to amend" the seminary curriculum with almost breathless insistence, born of new and tremendous realization of the meaning of the Gospel.

And here we come face to face with a sign of promise on the churchly horizon. While Dr. Hyde is essentially sound in his criticism and maintains a position for the most part impregnable, it is possible that he fails sufficiently to emphasize the progress recently made in divinity-school methods. What the middle-aged clergyman of the present might have welcomed with joy unspeakable in his years of preparation is now the privilege of students in certain institutions. The study of social science in its purely practical aspects grows steadily in favor as an important feature of seminary drill. The wise and honored leaders of a decade past, not infrequently under public suspicion and disfavor, established courses for the investigation of questions uppermost in our social economy. I can recall one noble professor, still comparatively young, whose attempts in this direction invited the criticism that he "ought not to stir up discontent among the masses." Ah! who among the preachers "standing in jeopardy every hour" because of his heart-conviction of the supineness of the church has not heard this pitiful and disconcerting accusation as the death-knell of his pulpit peace? And these pioneers of but a few years since literally "blazed out" a path through forests of seminary lumber

to this goal. Their work has been most useful in equipping some churches with men competent to apply the broad ethical teachings of Jesus to present industrial conditions.

That the lot of such preachers in a fashionable church environment often leads straight to Gethsemane no one can doubt. That clerical distress, resulting from overplus of preachers and other patent causes, is an exceeding bitter cry may be easily established. But, nevertheless, if men will crowd into divinity schools, men lacking every quality of leadership, the schools, at least, are beginning to grapple intelligently with the real problems of human existence and will educate such material as they have far more sensibly than ever before. Moreover, it is refreshing to know that the baneful seminary rivalry for "big classes" is yielding to the common-sense demand that theological education shall be harder to get and harder to complete. The placard "Candidates Wanted Here" has been shelved in several conspicuous instances. It ought to have been chopped into kindling-wood long ago. Now that Dr. Hyde has shown where the axe is, the sound of splitting seminary sign-boards should make a "joyful noise" in the land. The divinity-school prospectus is not so alluring as it was—thank

heaven! "The old order changeth." Harvard, Chicago, Yale, and other theological schools, in addition to slowing up the movements of the eleemosynary pump, are beginning to realize that churches are not just begging for preachers. On the contrary, preachers are begging for churches. And the day is not far distant when seminary authorities will discourage young men from seeking the ministry, rightly inferring that the young fellow who is not discouraged by the most gruesome tale of pulpit plethora, and welcomes hardship with a sparkle in his eye, is likely to make a preacher worth hearing, even if he fills a chair of tent-making to support himself, like immortal Paul.

So, then, while fixing responsibility upon divinity schools for indifference of churches to social problems, we also commend these schools for awakening, though tardily, from Rip Van Winkle theological slumber.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WAGE-EARNER'S OPINION OF EXISTING CHURCH CONDITIONS.

In the conduct of these discussions on the "Modern Church," brief passing reference has been made to the average man's opinion of that institution. It is now proposed to get at the very heart of the wage-earner's objection to the church. I employ the phrase "wage-earner" merely as a generic term to cover the attitude of a class in the community, while freely conceding that dissidents from this point of view are to be found in the very class described. It may be safely affirmed that among working people there are two class estimates of the value of the church. One expresses bitter and violent hatred of the organization. An artisan with his dinner-pail in hand, while passing a costly and hermetically sealed church edifice on a leading thoroughfare, was heard by an eminent New York clergyman to exclaim, "G—d d—n the church!" We are deal-

ing with hard facts in these essays, and it is well to be explicit, particularly since the clergyman did not hesitate to repeat the phrase in his own pulpit.

This objurgation represents the extreme artisan animosity toward the institution. However shocking the utterance, let us be just and say that the language is far from implying necessarily the hatred of the principles of Christianity which are often wholly divergent from the principles on which the church builds. Now the other class estimate of the church is altogether more moderate and worthy of consideration. This type of wage-earner sums up his objections in a manner by no means offensive, and in some cases a note of sadness breathes through the pipe of his complaint. From long association with workingmen, both in early factory life and in the beginning of his ministry, the writer is certain that he understands the sentiments of this moderate type. And some years ago, in studying this question afresh from the pages of four bulky volumes of the Blair Report on the relations between labor and capital, he discovered exactly the reasons, from the lips of workingmen, why the church is neglected. And here is what they say in a few pertinent quotations out of many quotable pages.

A very intelligent Cambridge printer testified:

The Wage-Earner's Opinion.

"Mechanics do not go to church because they find a substitute for the religious idea in turning their attention to the remedying of social evils, the uplifting of their own class and those beneath them, and the righting of the injustice sustained by working people. Mechanics discover many charitable, humane, merciful people in the churches, but they also discover that many church members take advantage of the peculiar organization to advance their own selfish interests. It is not the spirit of religion the workingman objects to—he rather strives for that—it is the ecclesiasticism and dogmatism of some church members and the hypocrisy of others."

A type-founder in the city of New York testified:

"Workingmen believe that more money is put into church edifices than is right, and they look with suspicion on the power of wealth in the management of churches. They are not on the best of terms with the clergy, because they believe that clergymen, as a rule, are not free to express their honest convictions. Large numbers of operatives would gladly send their children to Sunday-school, but do not feel able to dress them in the fashion which seems to be required by well-to-do churches—a fashion equally imperative in keeping parents from the House of God. Then, too,

there is desire for rest, which, coupled with large decay of belief in theological conceptions underlying religious organizations, diminishes church attendance of wage-earners."

Now, if these testimonies, which are truly representative, and shrewdly as well as tersely expressed, could be reduced to scientific social phraseology, they would appear in the nutshell statement of a very notable clergyman, who also gave evidence before the Blair committee. Like many devoted thinkers in progressive pulpits, this clergyman found himself in close agreement with workingmen's view of the church, and he sums up the case for his clients by urging these theorems: "Money and social position dominate the church; the church becomes the upholder of civilization as it is; it has accepted the anti-Christian dogmas of the older economists, and in doing so has really turned traitor to the ethics of Christ. Is it any wonder," he adds, "that the workingmen is repelled from a church that has no better gospel than the *laissez-faire;* no better brotherhood than the selfish strife of competition; no kingdom of God for human society on the earth, but only a kingdom in the skies?" And the conditions herewith described by workingmen,

set forth by clergymen in propositions looking toward social reform, virtually state the whole indictment of the wage-earner against the organization. This indictment is the case of extremists and moderates alike. It is voiced by the violent antagonism, which, as Joseph Cook once remarked, "hates the very shadow of the church steeple on the village green," speaking for the mill-operatives of New England: and it is also voiced in the calm and temperate deliverances of the intelligent artisans who testified before the Blair committee. What shall be said of the truth or falsity, the reason or unreason, of the chronic workingman's complaint of the church?

The writer has no disposition to enter into the merits of the question *in extenso*. His own opinion of the *status quo* of modern church life, in the large survey, has been made sufficiently clear already. The straw will not be threshed over again. The complaint brought against the church by the workingman may be as groundless as the charges hurled at the early Christians by their foes. Their accusations may not ring true in the judgment of conscientious defenders of the church. We do not at present hold a brief for plaintiff or defendant; but this is the point to be insisted on, and it is vital: There is no possible

doubt of the fact that the church has lost its hold on the great masses of wage-earners! Fifty divergent reasons may be advanced in explanation, but the unpalatable fact remains. Those whom she ought to gather in with loving tenderness and care are absent from the fold. The Jesuits by every art accommodated the church to the world; the Dominicans, by their intellectual skill, preserved and enforced the integrity of Catholic dogma; but the Franciscans, with girdle, staff, and feet shod with sandals, went about among the common people, teaching and preaching, and rendered enormous service to Rome by keeping the toiling millions in touch with a church organization they had begun to regard with dislike. Will the Protestant church of to-day imitate the zeal and devotion, if it does not copy the methods, of the Franciscans in the effort to reclaim the alienated wage-earners? Certainly no one at all conversant with the real state of affairs will deny the words of a writer who says: "Go into the ordinary church on Sunday morning and you see lawyers, physicians, merchants, business men with their families; you see teachers, salesmen, clerks, with a proportion of educated mechanics; but the workingman and his household are not there." And they never will be there until "that which

should be a corps in the host of a living God, now degraded to the position of a musico-religious club," returns to its primal motive and purity. The separation between the church and the masses is broad, deep, and universal, with the single exception of the Church of Rome, which, whatever her faults, is still worshipfully democratic. Will that chasm ever be bridged by Protestant Christianity?

Here we reach a positively optimistic conclusion. I speak advisedly when I say Protestantism has become seriously alarmed at the drift of wage-earners from her churches. That alarm has been growing for ten years. It has taken deep hold on the minds of her ablest and most consecrated servants. And the result is the phenomenal growth of the idea of the institutional church. The writer, although comparatively young in the ministry, well remembers when this conception was nascent. Now it is spreading in every quarter like a ribbon of rosy light across a darkening sky. And the church of the next twenty years that refuses to harbor the institutional conception of work and influence, and to develop that conception to the best of its ability, will be doomed to extinction, and deservedly! Fear has begun to galvanize into life the dormant

elements of a once Christly church, and the thought of a genuine brotherhood is now supplementing the lower motive by the higher.

Broadly speaking, the existing church conditions are yet demoralizing, unwholesome, and thoroughly unchristian. But the thin edge of a loftier purpose begins to feel its way. "The church that does not make itself a social power has little chance of growth." This excerpt from an *Evening Post* editorial epitomizes a deep truth of experience. And in becoming a social power —that is, an uplifting influence in "education, charity, public health, economic welfare, and practical politics"—the church radically alters its constitution and methods of work. So that the church of the future will not in the least resemble the church of the past. Here is another optimistic factor. The stress will be laid on a conception of religion which verily does the service of God in teaching how to make good bread in the cooking school no less than in the teaching of the ethical content of the Gospel from the pulpit. The church of the past taught, "save your soul by dogma;" the institutional church will teach that he who seeks to save his soul by dogma leans on a broken reed. That church will say, "Look! Here are fields white to harvest. Men

suffer hunger, thirst, cry aloud in bitterness from the depths of crushing environment, lift their pale, wan faces to the brazen sky of social selfishness to discern one quivering rift of tenderness. Get hold of these men hand to hand, heart to heart, in the red, warm glow of real fraternity, and you shall save your soul by the self-revelation of its vastly nobler capabilities when enlisted in the work of the divine uplift of humanity." The doctrine that a man must be urged to save his soul because of a personal and selfish fear that he may be lost, whatever the fate of others, is a dogma so abhorrent to the spirit of true religion that one is amazed to find it still prevalent in theology. And the broader conception of life and duty, as voiced by the enlargement of the office and work of the church, not only puts the quietus upon the wretched perversion of religion, but also awakens a glorious hope for the future of Christianity.

Will the transformed church win back its alienated millions of wage-earners? It is doing *just that* wherever, in the few comparatively isolated instances, the church bravely builds on the indestructible foundation of a spiritual democracy.

CHAPTER IX.

MODERN CHURCH LIFE DEVELOPED BY MUTUALISM, NOT SOCIALISM.

THERE are no more pregnant words in the New Testament than those contained in Matthew's Gospel which read: "And all ye are brethren." They are meant to apply to all centuries and to all races. There is no statute of limitations upon the ethical utterances of Jesus. The man who works for himself alone, though his name be heralded on two continents, is smaller than the dust of the balance before his Maker. Brotherhood is only Christhood written large in human souls. We arrive at this as the key of the verse just now quoted, and we also arrive at the doctrine of mutualism as the foundation on which all healthful church life depends. Mutualism is the first and last word of Christianity. By this is meant the reverse of individualism. By this we teach that men should work for and towards each other in common helpfulness in-

stead of away from each other in common selfishness. Phillips Brooks, who proclaimed this doctrine with characteristic and noble eloquence, says that mutualism is sometimes called socialism, sometimes communism. If so, not to be a socialist is not to be Christian. But as we interpret this great preacher and all who look to mutualism as the solvent of existing church conditions, the socialism implied is far from conveying certain implications of a party of that name. Historically, both communism and socialism are political and economic terms rather than moral or religious terms. They portray a theory of human society based on definite economic principles whose truth or falsity forms no part of the present discussion. Mutualism is not a cult, an economic creed, or a series of maxims applied to existing industrial conditions. Rather is it, in the further language of Phillips Brooks, "the new life, where service is the universal law." Thus understood it becomes the rule of conduct for the Christian world; the truth that builds human society into Christly relationships. What of its present status and recognition in the church?

One hazards nothing in saying that practically this doctrine of mutualism finds relatively feeble

support in church circles where the type of churchianity considered in these pages obtains. The entire drift of church life is away from such ethical mooring. The complexity and multiplicity of modern life, the distractions of fashionable society, the cold formalism of worship, the constant obtrusion of financial considerations, and the iron inflexibility of the law of the "survival of the fittest"—all bear a part in submerging the Christly offices of mutualism. The tenets of society and business operate as centrifugal influences to draw attention from the vital centripetal force of this principle which is the very heart of the Gospel. This fact precipitates the warfare between those who would win the church back to her first allegiance, that doctrine which made Julian tremble and shook the pillars of paganism, and those who are content with the churchly *status quo*—as long as the bills are paid! The marble-fronted churchly portals and the bolted gates, closed six days in the week, say, in effect, that mutualism is a pretty paper sentiment, but inapplicable where class conditions prevail. The awakened and prophetic spiritual instinct of certain pulpits, dissatisfied with the attitude of the church, strenuously seeks to make this doctrine a living truth in the work of the organization, for

it is rightly believed by such pulpits that unless the truth is restored to the place held in the first Christian century the church dies. And thus the battle is joined.

Now in order that we may clearly apprehend what mutualism, as defined, signifies in ethical relations, let us take an illustration from Christianity as applied to the accumulation of wealth. Communism, in its last analysis, is always divisional of property either by voluntary consent as in the book of Acts where "they had all things in common," or by the progressive legislation which lodges the sources of production in the state that a more even distribution of material benefits may ensue. This may be defended by good men under the guise of "Christian socialism," and time may demonstrate the equity of the theory. But mutualism—where men move for and towards each other in common helpfulness—is not divisional nor distributive on any economic theory of property-holding. Nor does it seek by statute to remedy material maladjustments and meagre rewards of toil. Mutualism simply means Christian love in perpetual search for brotherly service, and the wealth of church members, on this view, is not only a trust from the Almighty, but it is also a trust whose sole vindication is the service

it renders others. There are those who affirm we can never rely on the voluntary altruism of the wealthy. Hence, the state or municipality must "saddle the gentleman," as Mr. Stead puts it, with the duty of contributing in purse and person to the public welfare. For example, in a Swiss canton the college graduate and the inheritor of riches must serve the people by looking after the town pump if he does nothing more! Again we say the element of compulsion by law, however tenable as a theory of statecraft, does not enter into the conception of mutualism. That principle exacts service from those who adopt the Christly teaching of brotherhood, and its mainspring is love, not law. The Christian believer will see to it that his wealth in process of creation violates no ethical principle which God writes on the human conscience. He will also see to it that his wealth in process of distribution fulfills the meaning of Portia's description of mercy, "It blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

Nor is it denied that wealth may be unconsciously altruistic. Bessemer, the inventor of a method of manufacturing steel by purifying iron from carbon through the introduction of oxygen, is said to have accumulated ten millions of dollars. He may not have given away one penny, but his

process, being of the highest industrial value, was probably worth uncounted millions to humanity by furnishing a better tool presumably at lower ultimate cost. Yet no man has a right to shield himself behind the conception of unconscious altruism. Vastly more is demanded of him by the conditions of his discipleship. If he believes himself to be "bought with a price"—as the churches teach—and that price the "blood of Christ," not one dollar is unreservedly his. For every thousand dollars of additional increment of money the Christian pledges himself anew to the divinely sanctioned disposal of the same. It must minister, over and above his modest personal needs, to the opening of channels through which the divine principle of brotherhood in action may flow. Even on the growing hypothesis of the uses of wealth, which is not distinctively Christian in expression, the truth of C. W. Baker's words is conceded by all just minds. And those words I find in his little book on monopolies, and reading as follows: "The amount of wealth which any man receives should bear some approximate relation to the benefits which he confers upon the world." Mutualism, then, in some form or other is imperatively the groundwork on which the church should build and enlarge. To

neglect the doctrine is to tear the very heart from the Gospel teaching. And we have employed the illustration of wealth because it is here that we find the prosperous church most recreant to her duty.

He would be a bold man indeed who would claim that Christian wealth is in any sense consecrated. Here and there in isolated cases it is. But the terrible indictment contained in Dr. Strong's book entitled "Our Country" has never been met. If that book had never been written the personal experience of every keen observer of church conditions would be sufficient to substantiate our claim. And just at this point we discover a sign of unquestioned optimistic value and significance. The Christian church is beginning profoundly to realize her own selfishness and indifference to the principle of mutualism. Ought a Christian civilization, so called, to permit so much of heartache and misery in the world when its resources are so overpoweringly ample to relieve? One hears this question in circles where twenty years ago the mere suggestion would have subjected the questioner to the charge of unbelief. Dr. A. H. Bradford writes, "The very dissatisfaction with existing conditions is a sign of progress." Precisely so! Many true souls in the

church, undaunted by the silly and sneering accusation of pessimism, clearly perceive that Christian fraternity is more sentimental than real. And by persistently urging "back, back to the creed of mutualism as Jesus himself taught it," they have set in motion such currents of church activity to-day as promise renewed invigoration with the primal impulse of Christianity. This fact is the good cheer of the present church situation. The conditions are bad enough at the best, as I have tried faithfully to show. But a condition is never irremediable when zones of light still belt the sky and the murmurings of protesting spirits quicken to reformatory action both the lazy and the *laissez-faire!* Your real pessimist is he who cries "peace" when there is no peace, and, ostrich-like, hides his head in the sand rather than face a grave peril determined to surmount it.

I have in mind at this moment a portrait which so completely fulfils the meaning of mutualism as a law of Christian life and conduct that I will briefly sketch that portrait as the best object-lesson I know of the principle set forth. Some years ago there died in Toronto a well-known personage, one of the most Christly and also one of the most churchly of men. Thrice was he elected Mayor of the city almost without opposition.

He refused the title of knighthood from the government. His soul flamed with love for his kind. Of keenest business instincts, director of banks and companies innumerable, he voluntarily surrendered thousands and died comparatively poor because he sacrificed every investment and security on which he could not call down the blessing of heaven. He supported and endowed more than one rescue mission for fallen men and women. Every night after business hours he went out in search of some one to help. He gave thousands of dollars, a tenth, a fifth of his income in beneficence. To behold his face was an inspiration. When he died all the city wept. Women in faded garments, and with pinched features; men toil-worn, horny-handed, bent with the strain of poverty; the high and the low; the banker and the beggar—all defiled before his coffin to look upon that calm, sweet face which bore in death the smile of God. And in fifty years he did his work and showed the world how true fraternity is the very breath and essence of the Gospel.

In such a life we find the key to the new social order. That order, with the redemption of the church, will come not by class legislation nor by insistence upon religious dogma. It will come by

the conversion of churchianity into the fragrant bloom and flower of Christianity. It will come as light breaks in the east, crepuscular, faint, but glowing, and full of promise for the meridian. And the key to the arch will be the precious and indestructible stone of mutualism.

CHAPTER X.

LIGHT ON THE HORIZON.

It must be apparent to all who follow the course of history that a certain degree of odium always attaches to that individual, however sincere his purpose, who reminds his fellow-men of disagreeable truths. Conservatism, securely intrenched behind precedent and tradition, turns a deaf ear to venturesome scouts traversing the enemies' country and warning the besieged that mines are ready to be sprung beneath such defences. And when the danger can be no longer disguised, instead of quick rally to repair the mischief and repel the invader, the uncompromising conservative wastes precious time in heaping upon the unfortunate prophet bitter denunciation. Not that it would be wise to displace the conservative of reasonable temper and intelligence. In all economy of thought and effort a judicious mixture of caution and boldness is essential to the preservation of that equipoise of mind whose

steadiness is the guarantee of solid and assured results.: But the conservatism which, "having eyes will not see, having ears will not hear," insists that all other eyes and ears reporting grave lurking perils are credulous and deceived, is a conservatism most responsible for ultimate loss and ruin. Such habit of thought in the church will suffer rude awakening before the heavy hand of existing untoward conditions is removed from the Ark of God.

Historically, was there ever a time when earnest reformers were not looked upon as visionary and impracticable since the day when Pope Leo X. contemptuously referred to the Lutheran outbreak as a "squabble of monks?" Historically, was there ever a time when the timidity of the let-alone policy in church and state, loving peace more than the truth that wins by blood and tears, did not say: "What is the use of stirring up debate? Why not let things go on as they are?" Historically, was there ever a time when Christ's own words did not apply to the preaching of His truth: "Think not that I came to send peace on the earth. I came not to send peace but a sword"? Particularly is this so when the declaration of many bold thinkers in sermons and books, calling attention to the evils in church life

portrayed in these papers, also involve the performance of duties and services now habitually shirked or evaded. Consequently, it is not to be expected that messages hot from anxious minds and hearts, foreboding evils clearly demonstrable from a candid survey of church life, will receive more than cold welcome from traditional churchianity. Consolation must then be found in the words of the ancient, burning with his message but fearful of its reception, "Strike but Hear!" He who lodges a germ of thought even in hardest soil, with the bare chance of grain to sprout from the fruitful seed, may well be content to be harshly ordered from the premises by the police officer of traditionalism now that his seed is sown.

And herein lies the great and conspicuous optimistic factor in the entire present discussion of churchly tendencies. The dry, baked, impenetrable crust of churchly indifference to the inward truth and power of the ethics of the Gospel at length begins to soften under the smiting blows of fearless thought-leaders in the bosom of the church. The massive framework of its traditional theology rocks and quivers beneath the impact of that impressive Thor's hammer of the nineteenth century—the onward and unfaltering march of scientific knowledge, broadening to the

widest confines of ethical illumination. A new flame begins to burn upon the watch-towers of Zion, feebly at first, and but a disc of light surrounded by mediæval shadows, but beaconing forth as it grows in steadiness the promise of the earlier and glorious days of Christian faith. That flame is the awakened consciousness of multitudes in the church, that a pagan, "suckled in a creed outworn," is a manlier man than he who, while nominally accepting the ethics of Jesus as of Divine authority and sanction, virtually denies the application of that ethical teaching to the social and industrial relations of his time. In magazine, pamphlet, book, and sermon there rings the accusing chorus of voices calling upon a recreant church to return to the simplicity, beauty, tenderness, sincerity, and spiritual democracy of the period when the Gospel knew not fear nor favor before the rich and haughty; when lord and serf melted in common love and kinship as each partook of the mystic symbols of the Saviour's passion in the bare "upper room." And in this growing volume of enlightened knowledge as to the real ethical teaching of the Gospel of the Man of Nazareth, I find a bow of radiant promise spanning the sky of the long, dark years of fashion and formality in worship, and we are beginning to

L. of C.

perceive with exultant eyes that the "Church of the Open Door" obtains a foothold, while the church built upon class distinctions is driven to its illogical and pernicious defensive.

Nor is it to be presumed that such vantage-ground has been secured without such intensity of feeling as often attends clashing methods, variant conceptions, and disturbed organic relations. The writer has preserved a mass of testimony from the lips of preachers and teachers confirmatory of the positions maintained in this book, but a small part of which has been quoted. Reading between the lines of such voluminous testimony, one who knows the situation in modern ministerial circles will be painfully conscious of the *cost* of such deliverances. The preachers of to-day whose work falls into line with the general tenor of the newer thought take upon themselves a vast personal risk. They must meet the charge of doctrinal laxity; suffer under the imputation of being seekers after notoriety; bear in silence the time-honored allegation that he who wanders from the beaten path of precedent is a disturber of the peace; repel the invectives of the thoughtless, who cry "pessimist" to him who seeing evil lays it bare. They must also, not infrequently, mourn over the estrangement of personal friends,

and probably witness the desertion from the parish of family after family, because of personal irritation at the faithfulness of the pulpit word. I am able to put my finger upon men who have endured all this—and more—and yet with "high-heartedness" and undimmed devotion to truth, go their "painful way in the world with a smile in the soul," as George Sand wrote of Balzac. Their prayer is the noble aspiration of Theodore Parker:

"Give me, Lord, eyes to behold the truth;
A seeing sense that knows the eternal right;
A heart with pity filled, and gentlest ruth.
A manly faith that makes all darkness light.
Give me the power to labor for mankind:
Make me the mouth of such as cannot speak;
Eyes let me be to groping men and blind;
A conscience to the base, and to the weak
Let me be hands and feet."

All hail to these prophets of the better day waiting for the church of God, for by their unyielding devotion to the long-buried ethical teachings of the Gospel, and by their brave refusal to compromise with hollow ecclesiasticism, veneered by fashion and upholstered with religious conventionality,

they have compelled recognition of thoughts and ideals imperishable. They have begun a work of restoration by seeming to assail the very pillars of the temple. And all the helpful light which now is shed upon the condition of the church—deplorable as that condition is—radiates from pulpits where counsels of expediency suppress not one iota of the truth which makes for social righteousness.

We have, then, abundant encouragement in the fact that the hardened crust of churchly indifference to the sublime mission and purpose of its Founder shows signs of breaking, and this because of the self-sacrificing manhood of religious leaders who esteem it a privilege to follow in the footsteps of Kingsley, Maurice, and Ruskin in place of worshipping before the dead altars of a fashionable and formal churchianity. There is ever a church within a church. Whenever the formal church has laid its cold, deadening touch upon the vital warmth and zeal eternally at the heart of the Gospel of Jesus the bondage of the letter has ultimately been broken by some marvellous renewal of spiritual force and energy. So will it be in the future. The ultimate form to be assumed by Christianity, both in restatement of doctrine and in the readjustment of its life to so-

cial and industrial conditions, is a matter of conjecture. But one thing is certain—the church of the predominant type in cities hastens to its extinction. The church which makes its faith and practice conformable to the high and holy teaching of Jesus, to the remotest ethical implication, is the only church that will vindicate its right to exist. The one expresses merely churchianity, the device of man; the other represents Christianity, not the only true religion, but the only religion which best meets the multiform needs and yearnings of humanity, because of its wider sweep and the clearer revelation of the divinity within ourselves. That church, with but the loss of a single word, realizes the dream of Akbar as portrayed by Tennyson:

"I dreamed
That stone by stone I rear'd a sacred fane,
A Temple, neither Pagod, Mosque,
But loftier, simpler, always open-door'd
To every breath from heaven: and Truth and Peace
And Love and Justice came and dwelt therein."

On the English coast there is a fountain within high-water mark on the seashore. Twice a day

the tide spreads over it, and the pure, sweet water is defiled and spoiled by the salt, bitter waves. But the tide goes down, and the fountain washes itself clear from the defilement. And when the troubled ocean subsides the cup of refreshment may be put to thirsty lips, undiminished and unsullied. So springs the water of life from the ever-open fountain of the Christly teaching. The salt tide of worldliness sweeps over it in vain. The bitter waves of encroaching churchianity suppress but do not stop the flow. The crested foam of centuries of theological strife will one day recede and the fountain will be there upon the shore of man's deepest spiritual need, uncorrupted as in the day when the Samaritan woman partook of it at Jacob's well. For, "until the stars grow cold, and the leaves of the Judgment book unfold," there shall not arise a greater than He who said, "Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Many there be who say that our Christian civilization is mortal like every other from the Chaldean down; that this sacred river is on its way to the bitter sea; is already shooting the rapids. Hermon, with its transfiguring glory, far behind; Galilee, with its Cana and beatitudes, behind; the Judean hills that are round-about Jerusalem sinking one

by one. But fear not. Declension is not apostasy; discipline is not destruction. It is the bitterness of the sea, not the sweetness of the river that is doomed. Consider, O consider, the vision of the Prophet. The little stream from under the threshold of the Sanctuary, rising to the ankles, to the knees, to the loins, becomes a river in which to swim, and the waters of the sea are healed."

When shall we have a Christian civilization? When the ethics of Jesus are exalted, not obscured, by a church that dares not live up to their reality.

CHAPTER XI.

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEW MOVEMENT IN THEOLOGY.

In our survey of existing church affairs we have already briefly considered the relation which new theology sustains to such conditions. We now desire to point out what, in our judgment, really constitutes the *pith* of the modern movement in theology. And it is but fair to say, in the beginning, that at the present time in the ranks of every Protestant sect, three opposing tendencies of opinion are clearly discernible.

First, we encounter cautious conservatism, able, upright, influential, but dogmatic and positive in the belief that Macaulay was right, when he said, "Natural Theology is not a progressive science." Apparently, its representatives have more regard for authority than for spiritual consciousness in religion; and they seem disposed to undervalue the nobility of spiritual manhood, when somewhat inimical to the rigid requirements

of historical Orthodoxy. Personally devout, such conservatism is the high sheriff who arrests every loiterer in fields of thought that are fresh and new.

Next, we meet with a class of laymen and preachers who are practically religious agnostics. They do not know where they stand, and are not unlike Daniel Webster's opponent in a civil cause, of whom the great lawyer said: "This man neither alights nor flies. *He hovers!*" Drifting with every tide, they hope eventually to grasp some floating spar on which they may reach a firm shore.

Midway between the conservative and rationalistic poles there has arisen a *third* tendency of opinion, generally described as the "New Movement," whose sign-manual is not yet complete, but whose dawning light already flushes the sky with the crimson of a fairer morning. This movement is rarely understood except by those who have been divinely called to become its pioneers. How can it be otherwise? What do the inhabitants of those regions nearest the poles know of the habits and conditions of dwellers in the temperate zone? The positions of conservative and rationalist are so remote from the ground occupied by those who accept the new views that

they cannot fairly interpret the scope and bearing of the movement. In fairness, it must also be admitted that the advanced thought is not yet able adequately to set forth its own purposes and limitations. But this is by no means discreditable, since all progress begins with vague yearnings and noble aspirations that stir the soul and fire the brain before the busy logic adapts intelligent means to definite ends. The plough upheaves the soil many a day before the seed sprouts into golden grain. We live in the period of stormy thought upheaval. Our children will gather in the fruits.

And yet the new movement in theology has already taken on certain features that serve to show how useful and beneficent is its mission. There are voices in the air that whisper sublime words of spiritual hope, and there are pens that are writing the epitaph of every system of exclusion and denunciation in religion. The fundamental tenet of the movement we are considering, the central truth on which it depends, asserts the enlargement of the spiritual horizon through ever-widening knowledge, that grows out of progressive thinking. History powerfully sustains the proposition. The heretic of to-day is the conservative of to-morrow. Areas of commonplace

facts were formerly the battlefields of advancing science. The despised reformer after his death becomes the canonized seer. Theological systems and social fabrics are but "mile-stones, showing how far yesterday's thought has traveled," as Wendell Phillips said of the written law. It is a familiar lesson that the most pronounced opinions of the present, viewed in the clearer light of the future, may be more empty of truth than the astronomical speculations of a horde of savages. Recognizing such possibilities, inseparable from the capacity of truth for infinite enlargement, the movement described is yet catholic enough in its scope to include all that is best and truest in the venerable past. And this I suggest as its *first* characteristic:—

1. *The new views do not arbitrarily break with the older systems of theological belief.*

It is incredible that such intellectual giants as the ages have produced in the arena of theological strife should bring forth nothing of permanent value. The great historic creeds of the Church, the matured fruits of their labors, are not so many articles of useless lumber in the storehouse of antiquity. Augustine, Edwards, and the fathers of the Nicene Council thought for immortality as certainly as Milton's "heretics in the

truth." The esteem in which these ancient confessions are held by the adherents of the new movement is amply set forth in the records of recent installing councils. But this very assent carries with it an implied denial of those features of the older theology that do not seem to meet the requirements of present day scholarship and religious knowledge. The relation, therefore, between the old and new is one of economy. As Samson brought the honey from the carcass of the lion, so will the Broad Church of to-day extract "sweetness and light" from the dead past, neglecting no treasure that ministers to the spiritual need. The purpose is to assail only those views of God and religion which, by their sincere falsity, have, in days gone by, contributed to dishonor His character and diminish the vitality of spiritual power. And with this purpose there is associated a supreme endeavor to make prominent the simple yet eternal verities of religion, that are so grandly emphasized in the historic creeds. In such a movement there is no room for raging iconoclasts, tearing down but never building; no place for intemperate Don Quixotes, running tilts against everything fixed and stable. Character and motives are not impugned. Opinions alone are condemned. It is not the intention to draw a

line of demerit between past and present belief. Whatever commends itself to the spiritual consciousness of men, whether spoken by Athanasius or Channing, is accepted as a divine message; and the most earnest prayer we breathe is that offered by the dying Goethe, "More light!"

2. But it is sometimes charged that the movement in question is characterized by *laxity* of belief. I shall throw down the gauntlet with considerable vehemence at this point, and boldly aver that the movement is really remarkable for *great positiveness of conviction,* which I name as its *second* characteristic. It must not be forgotten that the new theology *is* theology; that is to say, it has definite words to utter about God, Christ, and the soul, which affirm all that the Bible affirms of spiritual realities. It stands squarely on the New Testament basis. The "eternal verities" of the older creeds, of which I have spoken, are engraved upon the very heart of the movement that is new.

But the new theology will not be wise above what is written. The fundamental facts of revealed religion are received in their simplicity. Theories about the application of the facts to the spiritual needs of men are not formulated. Thus, we are agreed upon the truth that

"God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself;" but we do not attempt to unravel the interior workings of the divine nature, that clothes the man of Nazareth with the habiliments of the unusual and the incomparable. In like manner, the doctrine of the Trinity is accepted for its practical worth, as a revelation of the many-sidedness of God; while all endeavors to define the doctrine, on the basis of tri-personality, are abandoned to those ingenious persons who are fond of enigmas. Similarly, the doctrines of the atonement and retribution after death are held as moral and religious certainties; while the method of the one and the exact duration of the other are included among the things that St. Peter speaks of as "hard to be understood." Actually, the phase of thought we are considering positively declares the true principles of spiritual Christianity, such as prevailed in the first Christian century. It is a revival of the oldest of the old theology. Its mission is to make the narrative teaching of the four evangelists the luminous center of all spiritual knowledge.

Yet, with a positive purpose, the movement tends toward broadness in its grasp of principles; and the underlying principle of all asserts the integrity of truth that must not be violated at any

cost. Whoever suffers, whatever falls, truth, sacred, lofty, eternal, must be sought and found. No traditions, as false as they are hoary; no dicta of ecclesiasticism, riddled with venerable errors; no chains of churchly authority, burning as they chafe, must be allowed to impede the progress of the soul in its search after truth. The maxim is, On the sea of human thought there is space for every sail! Let the gospel of progress have free wings!

3. And, precisely at this stage of our inquiry, we touch upon a *third* characteristic of the new theology, that may be described as a *demand for spiritual freedom.* The inquisitorial spirit yet lingers in the bosom of the Church, but happily with diminishing power and virulence. The leaven of a larger liberty and a broader tolerance is beginning to work. The lions of ecclesiastical tyranny may still roar, and loudly too; but it is easy to see that they are chained. And yet there is enough of the old narrowness remaining to make the appeal for spiritual freedom a legitimate cry. I need only to mention the recent Briggs controversy in proof of this statement. Until councils *invariably* ordain to the ministry men who are orthodox on every point but that of eternal punishment, while sternly

holding to the law of present and future retribution; until suspicion and disfavor, not to say misrepresentation, are withdrawn from men who are adding many jewels to their crowns in the salvation of souls, though reputed heretics in point of doctrine; until the great leaders of this movement at home and abroad are heard without prejudice and judged without bitterness,—there is room in the evangelical body for a wider Christian liberty.

I see no reason why the attitude of every Christian thinker should not correspond to that assumed by a famous English essayist, who said, "I do not look upon an opponent as an enemy to be repelled, but as a torch-bearer to be welcomed for any light he may bring." Worthy to be taken as a companion truth is the declaration of Coleridge: "There are errors that no wise man will treat with rudeness while there is a possibility that they may be the refraction of some great light still below the horizon." It is the unfettered mind that grows. It is the unhindered outlook that sweeps the clear heavens. The truth of God cannot be shut up in the old measures. The new wine of to-day will burst the old bottles of yesterday, just as the new wine of yesterday foamed its way out of the old bottles of the day before. The life of God in the soul cannot be

confined within the formal limits of a particular creed. Thought must range wherever it will in the harvest-field of truth.

4. But the attractiveness of such a spiritual habit must not divert our attention from *a fourth* marked characteristic of the new theology. It is unlike all previous movements of advanced religious thought. I do not mean that it is different only, for this fact is but a platitude. Thought movements are never cast in exactly the same mold, though they often have a family resemblance. Yet the new theology is so thoroughly unique in purpose and tendency that its unlikeness to past upheavals must everywhere be recognized as one of its important features. Two historical developments of theological speculation are sometimes placed in agreement with the movement we are discussing. I refer to the rise of English Deism in the last century, and to the Unitarian controversy in Massachusetts, which began at a considerably later period.

In regard to the first, it may be said that its starting-point was a disbelief in the possibility of revelation. The wearisome conflict of theological parties impelled some to explore for a creed which could be held by all in common. The principles of natural religion were thus adopted.

The movement discredited Christian faith and forsook the Christian Church. The new views of to-day are as remote from those described as the east is from the west. The new thought is firmly planted upon the fact of revelation; it asserts the supremacy of faith; its aim is not separation from the evangelical body, but enlightenment within the Christian Church.

Nor is the historical basis of the Unitarian controversy parallel with the prime intention of the later thought. That conflict originated in a strong revolt against certain doctrines of extreme Calvinism, and the battle was fought on dogmatic issues alone. The famous disputes between Moses Stuart and Dr. Channing were only a series of doctrinal polemics. But the drift of the present movement is not dogmatic, but spiritual. Life is put before doctrine, though the importance of right belief is duly considered. To make men Christ-like is the supreme purpose. Whatever contributes to this end is eagerly seized upon as legitimate vantage-ground. A larger, nobler, grander future for the Church is promised through a practical realization of ideal manhood in Christ Jesus. In such a movement there is found a quality of thinking that will ultimately harmonize the various parties in the Church, in-

stead of provoking fresh divisions and sharper strifes, which is the usual fate of advancing religious thought. Not in our day, not in our children's day, but in the heart of the religious consciousness of the world's to-morrow will blossom that fragrant flower of spiritual beauty which is named Christian unity!

CHAPTER XII.

CHRISTIANITY IN ITS RELATION TO THE IDLE RICH AND THE IDLE POOR.

In the story of the Garden of Eden we read that God condemned Adam to hard labor for life because of his sin. Hear the sentence: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread until thou return unto the ground." I am not sure, however, that this allotment is a condemnation. Charles Lamb said, that Adam luckily sinned himself out of the garden! I am not certain about the cause of his departure, but I am positive that Adam, as a man, would probably have died of weariness had he remained in that garden always without work. It takes the simon-pure tramp to find the same pleasure in doing nothing that most men discover in doing something! Adam had not the instincts of the tramp in this respect. Therefore he did well to go out of Eden. Personally, I attach slight historical significance to this story. We believe in evolution. We believe that men have fought their way up, step by step, from the dark shadows of brutish

condition; and, with the incoming of reason, mind, and soul, they have wrested from the earth the elements of that material splendor which crowns our civilization. No other result was possible. To live they must eat; to eat they must toil, and spin, and plant, and reap; and, with labor of hand and fret of mind, they started that sweat upon the brow the rain from which has beautified the face of all centuries and watered the soil of industrial productivity. There is no more righteous enactment in all the universe than this, "If a man will not work, neither shall he eat." That settles forever the status of the corner loafer and the unregenerated dude. Which is the worse I do not know. In the attempt to decide I am like Father Taylor, the great sailor-preacher, who, upon the refusal of a Methodist minister to enter his pulpit because a Unitarian was there, fell upon his knees and cried out before the whole audience: "O Lord, deliver us here in Boston from bad rum and bigotry: Thou knowest which is worst, but I don't!" Whether the lazy tough, reeking with whisky and pouncing upon the unwary stranger, is not, upon the whole, less objectionable than the dissipated "chappy" spending his unearned money on disreputable actresses, is a pretty serious question.

One is rich, very likely, because his father struck oil; the other poor because he hates to work. Both are like old-man-of-the-sea on the backs of honest workingmen. A rich and idle roué, in his teens, ought to be whipped and sent to bed; the corner loafer ought to be starved into labor. And here I leave them.

But now, on this general question of eating and working as related to the idle rich and the idle poor, what is to be said? I am stirred to this subject by a recent editorial in a certain journal, which begged of the public to remember that over-refined charity, in its zeal to discourage the unworthy poor, might fail in remembering that the idle rich were equally reprehensible. The point is well taken, and, I desire to go into this a little, hoping both to deal justly and show mercy. And will the reader permit me to do this in a series of related propositions?

And (1) who are meant by the idle poor? Well, no one class answers to this definition. Types are varied. There is, for example, the Sam Lawson type of the village story-teller, celebrated in Mrs. Stowe's "Oldtown Folks," who sits on a fence-rail, whittling and spinning yarns, while his wife struggles to keep the wolf from the door and the children go ragged and un-

kempt. This class, good-natured and rarely vicious, simply runs to incorrigible laziness, and some very agreeable vagabonds, of the Rip Van Winkle order, belong to it. There is also the migratory class, born to restlessness and tramphood, continually on the road because travel without funds is more desirable than labor with funds. These are the individuals who take your bread and butter humbly at the door, and fling the gift away on turning the corner because a chalk-mark on the fence says to the brotherhood, "Stop here and you'll get rolls and coffee, with a rasher of bacon." Weed out the really unfortunate from this class, and you have possibly one sheep to every fifty goats—except in extraordinary times, when worthy men are on the road by thousands, discharged from industrial centers for causes variously interpreted by economists. We have also the incompetent idle poor—people who are in a chronic state of distress, work or no work, simply on account of their ignorance of management. They have never been taught the art of saving. The wages dribble out with nothing to show but debts, when another family, next door, on the same wage, puts money in the bank every pay-day. The first family is neither vicious nor recklessly extravagant; only ignorant of ways

and means of successful housekeeping. Debt discourages the father; discouragement impairs the quality of his work; this in turn puts a more skilful man in his place, and he joins the ranks of the unemployed.

But we must not review at length these various types. We proceed, therefore, to say that we have in mind in this address the *deserving* idle poor—men and women who have the same right to bread and butter that we possess who are more favored in the distribution of products; men and women whose hearts are sometimes bitter with a sense of outrage and injury, in that willingness and ability to work, with self-respect as the basis of character, find no market. In extraordinary times of industrial depression the name of the deserving idle poor is legion; nay, more, there is a class, much larger, equally deserving, employed at such pitifully low wages that their life is hardly more enviable than that of the unemployed. But the worthy idle poor, relatively few in times of normal industrial activity, relatively many in period of great industrial depression, the whilom workers at loom and forge, shall they be forbidden to eat because they cannot work? The idle poor man produces nothing: is he entitled to some of the fruits of the

joint productivity of others? The idle poor man, deserving, in time past has helped create the enormous aggregate wealth of the country. Does the country owe him anything over and above the wages already paid him? If society cannot give him work, shall society bestow bread? And is the bread a gift, or a portion of debt discharged? In other words, has the industrious, sober workingman, in prosperous days, received his rightful share of the aggregate increase of national wealth? This debt is unrequited, according to Henry George, Ferdinand Lassalle, and other profound students of social progress. It is a debt more than requited, according to Edward Atkinson, the *laissez faire* school, and the mass of capitalists. I suggest these questions. I have no space to discuss them. At present, in answer to my own question, who are meant by the deserving idle poor? I reply, men and women willing to work, of good habits, industrious and frugal, who, by reason of some phenomenal dullness in trade, or sickness, or any other defensible hindrance to saving, are now penniless, and, unless the rent be paid, homeless. What will you do for these?

But suffer me at this point to proceed with a second inquiry, and to ask, (2) Who are meant

by the idle rich? Here, again, the vast scope of the topic compels suggestion in place of argument, and I must once more advance a series of propositions to be accepted or rejected according to their soundness. To begin with, I affirm:

(*a*) An idle rich man is he who does little or nothing for his fellow-men. He may toil like a galley-slave in heaping up money. If he spends that money in a wholly selfish manner, or hoards it avariciously, he is contemptible in the sight of God. It will not do to say, for instance, that he helps his fellow-men by giving them work in putting up a magnificent house. For, in the first place, the equivalent of money spent in building the house is locked up in the edifice, and is therefore valueless except to flatter vanity; whereas, if invested in some manufacturing or other industrial plant, employment is given for a long term of years, invention stimulated, and productivity increased. And, in the second place, he who builds a palatial residence does it for his own gratification, and not infrequently to outshine his neighbors, without a thought of helping his fellow-creatures. I do not say that there are not circumstances which justify a man in building such a house. I am simply urging that he has no right to put it down as a benevolent contribution.

A rich man who works for himself all the time may die of nervous prostration through such devotion to business; nevertheless, his character has been unimproved in brotherliness, which is the essence of Christianity, and his money has brought forth nothing but money. In the presence of God he is empty-handed.

(*b*) An idle rich man is he who gains his wealth by other processes than those of honest industry. All wealth must come to the individual in one of five ways: 1. By earning. 2. By inheritance. 3. By gift outright. 4. By lucky discovery. 5. By stealing. I believe that stealing is looked upon with such general disfavor in civilized communities that I am justified in dismissing this method at once! Earned wealth alone represents the output of labor. Something remains to show for it as product. Inheritance, when the property that falls to another is the fruit of honest industry, is simply earned wealth transmitted in trust. Gift is usually the reward of affection; and, while it is true that the person who receives money by gift or inheritance did not earn it, the holding thereof is just, on condition that the money be used in such a way as to promote, not alone the pleasure of the recipient, but also the best interests of human society. Hence

people who inherit money they did not earn should be doubly solicitous to retain it on the basis of Christian stewardship, which means a portion of the income conscientiously expended in doing good, and the principle guarded from all shady transactions. Now, the man who acquires wealth by any method save that of honest industry, with these reservations applied, is simply a gambler in possibilities more or less questionable. If he works fifteen hours a day, he may still be an idler, as regards the necessities of his fellowmen, and a laggard in every good cause. Your mere speculator is bound to win on the toss of his coin. He may toss that coin all day long until his arm is weary, and "heads" may fall three times out of four, but this man may be of no more value in the kingdom of God than the Eastern beggar that dogs the footsteps of the traveler. And certain streets in America are full of idle men of this description.

But (*c*) an idle rich man is he who encourages his family in foolish and wanton luxury. The inequalities in human society would not prove so menacing to our civilization were it not for the vulgar and ostentatious show of some wealthy people. We insist that the head of the family shares in the idleness of its members by allowing

the gratification of every luxurious whim; and, if he lacks the power to forbid such display, he should abdicate his position as the head of the family! Complicity in a fault is to commit that fault one's self. If I permit stealing when I can stop it, although I am not a thief, I am touched by the pitch of his crime. The foolish weakness of many a hard-working capitalist in allowing his wife and daughters to spend with criminal prodigality when noble charities go begging for funds, transfers to his shoulders, vicariously, the righteous popular condemnation of their selfish idleness. We read that in New York a poor sewing-woman is found starving, her children beside her, and in the very next paragraph of the same paper we read that a society woman bought a diamond necklace for a poodle! Still further on we discover that Mr. and Mrs. W— have personally investigated cases of distress brought to their notice by a newspaper, and have spent more than one thousand dollars in relief. Which family, think you, deserves to be perpetuated? I have no great affection for certain magnates of the Standard Oil Company. I believe, upon the whole, that the methods of the Standard Oil corporation have inflicted a greater injury upon public morals than any possible cheapness of product

can wipe out. But I do applaud the manner in which one magnate brings up his children to economy, plainness of dress, systematic benevolence, and that self-respect which forbids the flaunting of their riches in the faces of the poor. And I hold, in general, that for every diamond added to the jeweled fingers of wealth, for every new and sumptuous appointment of house and household, there is involved a moral obligation to do more in philanthropy. The greater one's ability to spend on one's self, the greater the claim of humanitarian service. And I repeat that prodigal luxury argues complicity with blameworthy family idleness, whatever may be the individual industry of the head of the establishment.

And thus we might go on to show in certain other particulars how the common talk about the idle poor must be supplemented with equally just criticisms upon the idle rich, if one would faithfully interpret the verse which insists that bread shall be dependent upon work. We are not discouraging wealth. Far from it. I wish some people might be vastly richer than they are. I am not speaking of the man who, by a life of honorable business activity, replete with generous deeds and services, accumulates a competency, and spends the evening of his days in rest and travel, while

his thoughtfulness in charity continues. Such a man is a blessing to the church and community in which he lives. I have in mind that idle and selfish career whose bank account of noble deeds is always low, whose powers are rarely employed except to promote a personal advantage, whose gain is principally achieved by taking advantage of other men's necessities. These so living are called the idle rich, and I insist that their sons, haunting the side doors of metropolitan theatres, and their daughters lavishing maudlin affection on poodles girt with diamonds, are a more useless class—partly by reason of the want of noble parental ideals—than the idle loafers on the street-corners who will do anything but work. So much for the distinction between the various classes of the idle rich and the idle poor.

But now we come to the very perplexing problem, how to remedy this state of things. Into that labyrinth I cannot enter. But let us lay down a few general principles, whose truth or falsity must be determined by thoughtful minds.

And, first, scientific charity may demand too much of the idle deserving poor, just as indiscriminate charity may exact too little. Take a concrete example. Shall we always refuse to help a man because he is, at the moment, the

worse for liquor? That depends. If he has been assisted before, and is of incorrigible, sottish tendencies, possibly the pinch of hunger may be sharply corrective. If, on the other hand, he is reckless from despair, albeit a steady workman when times are good, and has taken a glass to drown the memory of the cold hearthstone where wife and children are crouching, poverty is clearly the source of his fault. Temporary aid may stiffen his power of resistance to temptation without impairing his self-respect. But indiscriminate charity often errs more lamentably by such unwise giving as fosters a willingly dependent class, whose every member is so much additional drain on the resources of the commonwealth. A scientific charity, that combines maxims with mercies, and is not so stiffly economic that it virtually repeals the Sermon on the Mount, is a most desirable institution.

But, second, all help should lead to self-help. As long as there is coal in the mines, ore in the hills, wool on the sheep, hides on the cattle, and exhaustless productivity in the soil, something is wrong when stomachs are empty and backs thinly clad. There can be no such thing as over-production as long as men and women somewhere in the wide world need every conceivable product

of human industry. The problem is to bring needed work to needy artisans. It is not done in times of special industrial prostration. Consequently there must be, for a season, much help that does not lead to self-help. You cannot create fictitious demand for labor without ultimately robbing somebody. This process only foists upon the workingman's back a heavier tax to be paid at some future time. Next to immediate self-help is that outside aid which keeps men and women from despair until work offers—work that meets legitimate demand.

I remark, again, that the present is a most excellent opportunity for the idle rich to know the idle deserving poor. The deep, instinctive prejudices between classes at the social extremes, arising in ignorance of each other's true environment, are never cleared away by legislation that draws from the wealth of privilege enjoyed by the favored to bestows upon the less favored. Never! They are diminished by the loving touch of personal sympathy; and if you wish to bring a hard, cold, selfish man of affairs into the mood of unwonted tenderness, induce him to visit the homes of the poor. And, my word for it, he will lie down at night with more of Christ's Chris-

tianity in his heart than he has experienced for many a year.

But, the whole secret of the correction of the present maladjustment of economic and industrial forces is an open secret. It is steadily to be maintained by Christian teachers—and to-day more firmly than ever—that there is no social or industrial ill whose initial remedy is not found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The difficulty is that all men who profess it do not live it. If they did, the tap-root of social ills, human selfishness, would be destroyed, and brotherhood would become a reality, not a name. I do not say that certain theories of reform do not contain a germ of regenerating truth. They do. Nationalism, State Socialism, other "isms," are by no means hopelessly illogical and visionary. I do not say that legislation may not step in to right industrial wrongs, or protect capital against the assaults of quasi-Anarchists masquerading as labor's champion. But it is becoming clearer every day that the inchoate schemes broached as remedial measures are valueless compared with the light and truth of the Christly teaching. If that light could shed abroad its radiance in every human soul, and that truth glow

in every heart, the words of the poet would justly describe the universal state of human society:

"Peace her olive wand extends,
And bids wild war his ravage end;
Man with brother man to meet,
And as a brother kindly greet."

CHAPTER XIII.

PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY.

In following the currents of ecclesiastical history up to their fountain-head beneath the Rock on which Jesus Christ established His church—namely, the faith of Peter—two fundamental conceptions of the supreme office and privilege of the Christian Church have obtained recognition. The first of these I shall describe as the *Quarantine* theory, which may be reduced to the phrase with which Channing begins one of his most impressive discourses. "A system of exclusion and denunciation in religion." On this view the church is like a castle, surrounded by moat, drawbridge, portcullis, with a sentry-box at every point of observation, and a roll of precedents so long that not even a prophet like Ezekiel could for a second time perform the gastronomical feat of swallowing it whole, and still live! And yet the expectation is that preacher, deacons, elders, presbyters, and bishops, with the godly assem-

blage of the multitude and the non-elect to office generally, shall pipe to the music of the shibboleth cry which says, "The church is for those every whit sound of doctrine, and its work is to preserve, primarily, soundness of faith." This means, as a rule, what Tennyson means when he writes, "What's up is faith, what's down is heresy." And the records of ecclesiastical history are, for the most part, but the memorials of the ins and outs who have sought to pull down or prop up the work of their predecessors. The conception of church life and work of which I am now speaking severely limits the message of the preacher to the proclamation of the facts that Christ lived and died for sinners—a statement of belief to which I subscribe; but, as a statement of the height, breadth, length, and depth of the preacher's pulpit utterance, this utterance is inadequate. This view also declares that all living, burning, vital questions of the present, affecting the morals of the community as related to problems of poverty, crime, philanthropy, trade, commerce, legislation, movements of sanitary, social, and political reform, are to be kept out of the church, and ignored by the pulpit, because, forsooth, they are not supposed to be a part of the simple Gospel of

salvation in Jesus Christ! Yes, and if such narrow, misguided, erring estimate of the relation of Christianity to life *had* prevailed, without check or hindrance, through the prolific years of our modern civilization, so richly freighted with discoveries that heavenward lift the weary feet of humanity, then the shackles of his degradation would still cling to the weary limbs of the slave; the plague-spots of American cities would widen the circle of vice and corruption; the charities that rebuke and shame the avarice of the few would disappear from sight as suddenly as the ring of gold at the touch of the magician's wand; while the drunkard and the profligate, won by the open door and warmed and fed by the pity that spoke not of Christ until heart and voice betrayed his love, would still wear the blistering and tormenting chains of passions now dissolved in tears of penitence and prayer! This conclusion further insists that the poor and neglected may go to church if they will, and, if they don't, are incorrigible sinners; and hence little effort is made to reach the classes of whose needs, struggles, trials, deprivations, well-to-do parishes frequently know as much as they do of the inside history of the court of Ptolemy Philadelphus. It also argues that unless the length of a creed is so great that

breadth is absolutely out of the question, some poor fellow who stutters his doctrine and makes sweet melody for the weary and heavy-laden upon the harp of his loving-kindness may creep in surreptitiously, and stand all unsuspected in the congregation of the orthodox. If he did, *some* voices might make more discordant music than his own!

Now, I hold that the Church of the living God is not built upon the sinking sand of an exclusive, inharmonious, unwholesome, worn-out, Gospel riddled theory of exclusiveness. There is not a verse in Scripture, not a company of disciples in the first century, not a torch of reason under a bushel or on a hill top, not a successful experiment or triumphant failure, to vindicate it. True, the work of a church must vary according to the needs of the century into which its life is projected. But the broad and generous view of church life and work, which I may call the *Humanitarian* theory, for want of a better term, covers the pressing needs of men and women in *every* century, whatever their form or character. Over against the conception stated, which limits the work and narrows the entrance to its performance, I will venture to set, like a glorious flag of rustling silk and voluminous folds proudly wav-

ing above a narrow, weather-beaten, diminutive streamer, the banner of the *new* crusade, upon which is emblazoned a cross, not merely as a symbol of theological belief, but as the symbol of a church whose doors swing open to men and women of loving, reverent faith, and whose avenues of usefulness lead in all directions whithersoever light and truth must go to raise, strengthen, comfort, heal, and bless the sons and daughters of God. Whatever a full, free, sweet, catholic interpretation of the Gospel of Christ may prompt the members of a Christian church to accomplish, through all the agencies of Christianity, literary, scientific, philanthropic, social, and moral, that thing I hold to be one of the many-sided and exhaustless appeals of a living church to a living age. Nay, more, all forms of labor which benefit humanity, and which the church *can* do, are *better* done under the seal and covenant of its high and holy authority than in any other way. Therefore, the mission of the church is as broad as human need; as lofty as the sublimest aspiration; as consecrated as the devoutest thought; as large in scope as the farthest conceivable sweep of its forces; and varied in just that degree in which it is able to give rest, hope, peace, and shelter to every tear-stained

pilgrim and way-worn traveler. And it is as wrong for an assembly of divines, called by courtesy an Ecclesiastical Council, to interfere with a ministry successfully meeting the exigencies proposed, as it is cruel for a horde of inquisitive hawks to attempt to rob a carrier-pigeon of the precious message to the starving garrison, which flutters beneath the swift and tireless wing.

But, at this juncture, somebody petulantly exclaims, "Not so fast there! The duty of the church is to save men from hell by preaching to them Christ, and the principal thing to be kept in view is the admission of such to its membership." But allow me to suggest that several things must be considered before the church, through its ministers or lay workers, can successfully do this. Of the people habitually in attendance upon public worship there are three classes: (1) The active, useful, consistent members of the church, always ready to say, "Here, Lord, am I," when any duty is required of them. (2) The cold, indifferent, unawakened, nominal Christians, whose names are kept on the roll of the church because there is no good reason why they should be dropped. Their whole duty seems to lie in steady attendance on Sabbath Day services; but as for knowledge of righteousness and peace and

joy in the Holy Ghost, and consciousness of growth in love of God and men—why, such emotions would surprise them as utterly as the descent of a summer shower from the blue and cloudless sky! And then, (3) there is a class of the so-called unconverted—people whose ears do not tingle at the strongest preaching, because such persons are already shot-proof through long service as animated targets for pulpit fulminations, and the only hope of their conversion must be looked for in the ultimate return of that form of noble reason which prompts a man to see, in a moment of startling, soul-searching power, that disloyalty to Christ, and unwillingness to confess Him impair the integrity of a life. Outside these classes there are scattered individuals, unknown factors in a congregation, whose relations to the church cannot be formulated. What they will become no man can say.

Now, I submit that the increase of effectiveness on the part of the church, whose visible result is the enlargement of the people in spiritual sweetness, depth, power, and devotion, can only come in one of two ways: (1) By bringing the unchurched multitude within its portals. (2) By inciting the regular worshipers to go out into

the wide world of human longing and privation to carry the helpfulness and sympathy of a living, nineteenth century Gospel. In this way—and in this way alone—will they kindle afresh the flame of devotion whose heat will thaw the icy barriers that so often divide the church from her needy children. In other words, the preacher will be able successfully to proclaim the Gospel of salvation when men and women hear it as a new and marvelous story, or hear it with quickened zeal and fervor. Therefore I say that to rescue men from the hell within their own bosom, which is a thousand times more real than a place of torment located everywhere and nowhere by theology at sixes and sevens with itself—to do this, one must avail himself of *all* resources which can be utilized through a hundred possible channels of Christian effort. Hence, the work of the church is to follow men with succor in whatever manner they can be assisted to light and truth and knowledge. Suppose I take a line and rod, with bait enough to catch a hundred trout upon a string, and throw the sinker into a pool beneath the willows, where no man ever yet suspected a fish to hide, and where none but fish able to crawl on land could possibly congregate. And there I sit in solemn state and watch a cork bobbing up

and down the livelong day, and quiver all over with anticipation, while behind the bushes the farmer's boy is grinning and wondering whether I am lunatic or clergyman—or both. But a good many of our churches are throwing out their lines in places where to *catch* anything would so surprise both minister and deacons that they would tumble over each other with excitement in their haste to haul the prey, and finally lose through excessive agitation! *All* because a narrow constructionist attaches but one meaning to this word *salvation!* I don't like the expression; in fact, I am reluctant to take it upon my lips on account of its awkwardness, but the whole truth is not set forth unless it be said that, to be saved, men must be brought into a *salvable* condition. That is, they must be led up to the point where the *personal appeal* of religion will at least receive attentive hearing. You may preach, lecture, persuade, entreat, warn, threaten, until your voice is as hoarse as that of the croaking raven, but unless you touch men by an act of personal, disinterested kindness that relieves poverty, crime, bitterness, pride, wrong-doing, of some part of its sting, salvation will be a name of hollow mockery! I have read that William Wirt, one of the most remarkable men of his day, was a

confirmed drunkard for many years, and, when all other means of rescue had availed nothing, he was reclaimed by finding upon his blistered and swollen face, as he lay in a drunken stupor upon what is now one of the principal avenues in the city of Washington, a handkerchief bearing the initials of the young woman to whom he had once been engaged, but from whose affection he had separated himself by drink. In passing, she had tenderly covered the still handsome though dissipated features to hide their shame from the vulgar sight of the multitude. Multiply this act into a thousand forms of kindly beneficence, prompted by the Christly spirit, and you have made Christianity something different from the current Christianity which Channing said he hoped would *not* last forever!

If, for example, we take into account certain industrial conditions of modern life, under which so many young men and women are struggling to preserve both faith and character against innumerable temptations, we shall have a concrete illustration of the large and unrestricted view of church life and work to which attention has been directed. Probably most of us are acquainted with the facts relating to the controversy in Mr. Moody's old church in Chicago, some

years ago, arising out of a sermon delivered by the pastor, and called forth by the following circumstances. The working girls of Chicago published a letter, in which they described very simply and earnestly the temptations to which they are subjected, and suggested an organization for the working classes which should at once be religious and social, the prime object being to furnish them legitimate society, and so guard against the dangers which come from isolation. The pastor preached a plain discourse upon this text, and proposed that a vacant lot in the rear of the church be used for the erection of a large and commodious building, so arranged that a pleasant and delightful home could thus be found by young working people of both sexes, with such safeguards established as would make it a most helpful resort. Some members of the church, including six members of the committee, objected to the discourse on the ground that none but strictly Gospel sermons should be uttered from the pulpit. By Gospel they meant salvation through Christ, with the terrors of the law appended. Well, the minister resigned, Mr. Moody came on, spoke to his congregation with common sense almost divine, appealed to the Gospel of Luke as that of the poor, said there was not a woe

pronounced in the whole book, and concluded by saying, bluntly, "Don't get a harp of just one string, and harp, harp, harp, all the time on that." The result is known. The church refused to accept their minister's resignation by an enormous majority, the six members of the committee went out, *on vacation,* and all was peace.

I mention this case because it presents very sharply the contrast between the narrow and the broad conception of the mission of the Christian Church of to-day. In the face of strenuous opposition in some quarters, the churches of our country are beginning to see that social, sanitary, industrial, and even political questions—in a philosophical, not a partisan, sense—must interest both pulpit and pew, or the masses will still further drift from our doors. The resistance to this movement is not always solicitude for a limited Gospel, but is sometimes encouraged by the fear that certain business and social sins will be rebuked. John Ruskin tells us that the rich refuse wisdom and salvation to the poor, and proved the sincerity of his speech by putting his large inherited fortune to service for the benefit of the workingmen of Great Britain. And, Count Tolstoï, the Russian, abandoned his rich and luxurious surroundings to go and live among

the common people. I would be understood as saying most emphatically that such a course is *not* demanded of every man enjoying wealth. And he would superficially teach who might insist that this conception of duty binds all good men to like renunciation. Wealth, divorced from stinginess, can be used for the world's benefit without giving up the bulk of it to others, and, even though this were done, division would not remedy, but rather increase, many of the existing evils. But, fearful that certain sacrifices may be demanded of the rich, the bold and unflinching declaration of a business and social gospel is not infrequently opposed. I have been informed —I know not how correctly—that a brilliant and gifted clergyman found it advisable to surrender a metropolitan pulpit because he denounced the condition of wretched tenement-houses owned by men of wealth in his congregation. Happy deliverance!

Now, the *true* idea of the office of the Christian Church will carry the oil and wine of its comfort into every place where the light of heaven discloses the wan and sunken features of misery and pain. If God is our Father and Mother, as Theodore Parker loved to think of Him and pray to Him, and the church is the holy

fellowship of His children, there is no valid reason under the sun why such an organization should not extend its influence and power to the remotest quarter of town and city where our fellow-creatures endure the burdens which fall upon the nether-world. Spurgeon once said, with good-natured yet cutting satire, "The trouble with ministers is that they will *parsonificate* the Gospel." Yet the church is doing a worse thing when it simmers the Gospel down to a mild decoction of theology and pious talk, and requires all men to drink out of the same cup on penalty of going thirsty and faint. And there is no way of forcing the church to the performance of its proper duty unless men obey the injunction written on the title page of a famous novel—"Put yourself in his place." Here comes in the application of the Golden Rule referred to in the opening of this essay—"What we would have the church do for ourselves, that ought the church to do for others." Well, what may this be?

If I am cold and hungry, without work or shelter, and shiver beneath a ragged coat, and send my frost-bitten feet on exploring expeditions between gaping holes in well-worn shoes, I am not anxious to have the minister to hold me on the street corner while he expounds the mystery of

pain, and invite me to the sanctuary next Sunday, when he very well knows that the usher will politely but firmly hustle me out as soon as I enter the door. No, I want him to encourage me to breast the storm of adversity like a man; to hope on and hope ever; and I desire, not charity from his church—God forbid!—but home and shelter there, and Christian sympathy, until I am able to get on my feet, and down misfortune in the arena of honorable warfare. And what is true of physical need is likewise true of business reverses, wasting cares, terrible temptations, forlorn environment, bitter trials, and crosses of every name and character. Where ought a man more naturally to go for strength and support than to the bosom of the church, which should be to him as a pillow of rest, sustained by the loving and kindly arms of Christian brethren? But, if the rest which follows weariness of soul be prolonged into idleness, let the same brethren, if they have not become lazy themselves, disturb the siesta by cutting out labor for the new recruit to perform. Look about, and we shall quickly learn that the church which comes nearest to this conception is doing the sturdiest work for Christ. And I would develop this view to the extent that when an honorable business man,

of devout and useful life, becomes financially embarrassed through causes beyond his control, it is not only the privilege but the duty of members of the same communion, blessed with abundant means, to give him monetary aid and encouragement. A visionary proposition, you say? Very likely. But unless the church has more visions, and fewer periods of sound and dreamless slumber, her brain and heart will become sluggish, lethargic, dull. We only know phantoms as such because realities exist. Even if Swedenborg, with erratic notions, come in at the door with leisurely laymen, they will not be so likely to play the part of Rip Van Winkle in the pews.

Perhaps at this point it will be urged that the preaching and church work of fifty years ago followed out the narrower lines indicated with profit to the community and success to the organization. But whoever makes the claim overlooks the changed conditions of our modern life, which are totally at variance with those established in the days when our fathers played on the village green. Then everybody went to church, and the young men and maidens filled the long galleries on either side of the capacious meeting-house, and chanted "Mere" and "Wells" to their hearts' content, while serious and reverent thoughts pos-

sessed their minds, and the man who did not go to church was looked upon as a kind of moral leper, reserved for the wrath of God. The population of the country was largely American and few centers of life were overcrowded; consequently there was little occasion for humanitarian or missionary endeavor, and the tide of immigration, now a mighty inrolling wave, had just begun to ripple here and there upon our shores. Business cares were lighter, wealth more evenly distributed, employment steadier, and the tenement house problem almost an unknown factor in the task of social regeneration. The drift of things was not *away* from, but *toward,* church life; and theology had such strong grip upon the intellects of the people that the metaphysics of faith and the subtleties of Calvinistic logic had a sort of fascination for the average mind. To be sure, the children crawled under the bed in fear of the preacher's catechism, and the sound of his boot-heels on the doorway struck terror to their hearts; but nevertheless, they could rattle off on their finger's ends enough theology to make a respectable system of divinity for the average worshiper of to-day. The Gospel revolved upon the axis of wrath, and while love hid in the background of the received faith,

its glorious sunshine, as we now enjoy it, was hardly permitted to take the chill from the atmosphere of religion. Most people were comfortably, or at least decently, situated; there were fewer instances of poverty, wretchedness, deprivation, misery, than now, and the masses, as we understand the word, had no existence. The phases of social righteousness and philanthropic effort, as I have presented them, did not appeal to the church of fifty years ago. Therefore, since everybody attended church, and theological issues were uppermost in the minds of the people, what was left for the dominie but to ring the changes on Saybrook and Westminster, to the infinite edification of his hearers? The *quarantine* theory ran its course serenely because there was no apparent need of any other. Now all is altered, and the reasoning of its advocates is wholly invalidated by the evolution of the stern facts of our modern civilization.

There is just now universal solicitude throughout all denominations of Christian believers because there are so few additions to the membership of the churches. But can we wonder at this, when our conception of Christian work is so narrow and inadequate, and our participation in the same so feeble and inefficient? Going to

church on Sunday, hearing music as an æsthetic pleasure, preaching as an intellectual diversion, and going home to forget it all after a satisfactory dinner—some of us have been doing this, and little more, for ten years, and how in the world can we hope to be at peace on such a record? We have not, perhaps, made one soul happier, one heart lighter, among all the hosts of the weary and heavy-laden. It has been money, money, money, or pleasure, pleasure, pleasure, continually. You cannot save men unless you touch their hearts. You cannot lift them without lifting your own lives above the level at which they halt. You cannot inspire the multitude with respect for Christianity until they perceive that you respect it sufficiently to make sacrifices for it. Never before, in the teeming life of the centuries, did such opportunity wait on the Christian Church. Never before was there such need of her services and prayers. May she everywhere become, like a temple beautiful, lifting the polished dome of her faith and works into the ambient air of religion, constantly purified and sweetened by winds that blow from the country of the waving palms and the crystal rivers; may the church open wide her doors to the vast multitude that daily groan beneath the yoke of un-

relenting poverty; may her walls resound with songs of praise from the grateful lips of men and women gathered into her fold by the loving importunity of faithful servants of the Cross; and may her cloisters be enlarged and extended in every direction so that all men needing comfort, assistance, refuge, and the inspiration of sympathy may discover unstinted welcome and hospitality within the holy precincts of her all-embracing love.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE RELATION OF MUSIC TO WORSHIP.

It is very evident that the ancient Temple worship did not lack in music. Besides the cymbals, psalteries, and harps, there were companies of singers to lift sweet voices in the praise of God and in the chanting of the great and serious realities of Israel's religion, which found expression in melodies of surpassing power. The modern age does not know all there is to be known about music. I suspect the ancients would sneer, and with good reason, at many of our modern performances, and certainly they might have good reason for hissing! There is a closer relation between intellectuality and musical taste and expression than most people suppose, and the literature which comes down to us from ancient times is of such potent power in the domain of thought that it would be strange indeed if music did not reach an equally lofty standard. A man does not need to study Her-

der's wonderful book on "The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry" to realize that the noble stature of David's muse marries thought to such melodious forms of expression as necessitate a corresponding felicity of sounds. Full choir, all trained, and every one skilful. No unsteadiness of parts in the headlong rush to finish first; no light operatic airs to insult the words sublime; no thunders or crashes of voices and instruments where a whisper of song is required; no prolonged screaming of sopranos and bellowing of bassos in the malicious effort to beat out the life of some tenderly reminiscent strain or word; no sprinting matches between contraltos and tenors, to see which shall climb the highest or sink the lowest; no repetition of beautiful devotional hymns with as little feeling in the hearts of the singers as though they were humming the latest catch-word of a popular ditty. None of these performances in the Jewish Temple. All is devout, exalted, appropriate, devotional, impressive, and soul-subduing, because the musicians themselves are close to the heart of the great Jehovah; the worshiping congregation hears his voice with awe, "as the sound of many waters," and the priests of the Temple lift their reverent thoughts to the great "I Am," with every cloud of incense that floats above the

altar. Here, then, is worship, the grandest that ever sought the form of ritual, and here is the God-inspired power of music to melt the stony heart of religious indifference to the measures of God's redeeming love. All other aspects of music in religious service, that merely show off voices, and entertain the jaded senses of the crowd, without a devotional spirit and moral purpose behind them, may be theatrical and imposing, and to a certain extent moving, but they do not rise higher than the altitude of a passing mood. Musical effect is one thing—musical sincerity another. Singers have pleased me with their proficiency; but I knew all the time that they had no more heart in what they sang than has a variety performer on the stage. Words may be eloquent; they are useless when they do not touch the soul. Church music may be charming; it is but an idle breath when no message of spiritual power goes from the singer to him who listens. The Puritans and Spartans were both agreed that luxury of sound was sometimes mischievous. The Puritan said—I quote his words—"Sweet music at first delighteth the ears, but afterward corrupteth and depraveth the mind." Timotheus, the Milesian, added a twelfth string to his harp, for which he was severely punished by the Spartans.

They feared this luxury of sound would effeminate the people. What would they think in our modern church, where music too often degenerates into show, and people pay for the luxury precisely as they buy a ticket to see Irving in the "Bells," only the sum is paid in lump for fifty-two dress rehearsals a year—mostly in palace-car churches, however, where religion is tolerated as not a bad thing to have, if it does not interfere with a good deal of sinning on week-days. We see, therefore, that music is not only closely related to mind, but to morals as well; and, church wise, this moral quality makes its swift appeal to the emotional sense; and the exact relation of music to the emotions and the effect of melody upon the listener are so truly and eloquently described in the language of Dr. Haweis that I welcome the opportunity which this occasion brings, to quote from the pages of that book which has become a household name—"Music and Morals." Says the writer: "Like the sound of bells at night breaking the silence, only to lead the spirit into deeper peace; like a leaden cloud at morn, rising in gray twilight, to hang as a golden mist before the furnace of the sun; like the dull, deep pain of one who sits in an empty room watching the shadows of the firelight full of memories;

like the plaint of souls that are wasted with sighing; like pæans of exalted praise; like sudden songs from the open gates of paradise—is music. Like one who stands in the midst of hot and terrible battle, drunk with the fiery smoke and hearing the roar of cannon in a trance; like one who finds himself in a long cathedral aisle, and hears the pealing organ, and sees a kneeling crowd smitten with fringes of colored light; like one who, from a precipice, leaps out upon the warm midsummer air toward the peaceful valleys below, and, feeling himself buoyed up with wings that suddenly fail him, wakens in great despair from his wild dream—so is he who can listen and understand."

If such be the mission of music, which George Eliot characterizes as love in search of a word, it is very evident that our Congregational, Baptist, Methodist, Unitarian, Universalist, and Presbyterian churches are yet indifferent to the musical advantages that flow from the adoption of a ritual of worship in which melodies and responses, prayers and confessions, under safeguards I have already set forth, shall alike call forth the helpful participation of minister, choir, and people. There can be no sort of question that the religious bodies which give the people

most to do in the service, and exact from the choir music of the most devotional type, are gaining the largest numbers of worshipers. In the first particular the Roman Catholic Church is seriously defective; but in the second particular it must be conceded that Protestants have absolutely nothing "approaching the grandeur of the Roman Catholic masses, where we have a mind like that of Mozart or Beethoven steadily working out, in strains of incomparable depth and pathos, a great connected series of thoughts, embodying all the varied phases of religious emotion." What man, capable of profoundest feeling, has not been thrilled to his heart's depth by the great cathedral music of the Romish Church? And in our own Episcopal body, where High Church symbols are sparingly but not always judiciously employed, what contributes more directly to the heartiness of the worship than the voices of the people so often exercised, and what touches the soul more tenderly with melting thoughts of religious privilege than the solemn strains of both processional and recessional chant? Our Presbyterian and Congregational churches have been absolutely forced into warmer, more varied, and more worshipful forms of service by the hunger of the people and by the pressure of competition from

without. On this point allow me to quote the strong language of Professor Waldo S. Pratt, of Hartford Theological Seminary, one of the most rigid and orthodox of Congregational institutions. He writes: "American dissenting churches have begun to see that in their protest against the Episcopacy of the eighteenth century they went to the extreme in many matters. They have not only fallen into bald and irregular habits of worship, but in their exaltation of the teaching office of the pulpit they have almost forgotten the worshiping office of the pew. Accordingly, throughout the land arises a cry for the enrichment of public worship. Hence the growing use of responsive reading, of formulæ of prayer and confession, of singing in which all the people may join." And in order that you may not suppose me to exaggerate this demand from the very heart of the body, I will add that, in the State of Massachusetts, 138 out of 422 Congregational churches reporting made use of responsive liturgical service. But most of us can remember the day when such an innovation would have seemed scandalous. Of course there has been—there now is—strenuous opposition to any departure from the customs of our fathers in this and in other respects. An acquaintance who recently

adopted for his church, by majority vote, a somewhat liturgical form of service, tells me that to this day certain of his congregation obstinately refuse to open their lips when the responses are read. And I beg of the reader not to be frightened by the name liturgical, for it comes from two Greek words signifying "belonging to the people" and "work" or "act;" and its early application simply meant that which was performed by the whole people, in congregation assembled. Now, upon the large view of the case, it must be admitted that a man could do worse than keep his mouth closed in church (he might sleep, for example, or interrupt the minister); but the argument so often used, which appeals to ancient usage as a test of fitness, is wide of the mark. If our fathers could rise from the dead and be with us to-day, yonder organ would be an abomination; the simple creed, on which many churches rest, "a divisive and perversive document;" the heat from our furnaces an effeminate folly, and cushions a useless luxury. In general, it may be said that, if the fathers of Puritan New England should rise to view the modern situation they would hurriedly retreat to their graves in deep chagrin that they knew so little when living! When a man appeals to the customs of his

ancestors, in point of doctrine or usage, as final authority, it means either one of three things: (1) His own blindness to the fact that Christianity is itself a sweeter, nobler, purer force because of the successively broadening interpretations of its meaning. (2) His strange ignorance of the truth which other men perceive, that his own prejudices are mistaken for homage of ancestral opinion. And (3) his utter insensibility to the fact of history which shows that he himself, however broad or narrow in theology, or anything else, cannot live a week without flatly opposing the views favored by the fathers. It is a cause of congratulation that no man can live up to his creed in this particular, for if men could be consistent we should still believe the world made in six little days, and credit the belief of the Rev. Cotton Mather and the clergy of his time, that witches could enter a room through a key-hole!

Now, in the present instance the question is, not whether the Puritans would have favored a liturgical form of religious service, but whether such service is best fitted to meet the wants of nineteenth century worshipers. It seems to me that any candid study of the situation must compel the latter conclusion. How cold and barren is the worship of the average New Eng-

land church! At one end the minister, buttressed behind a pulpit which appears to say in his behalf, "Touch me, O people, if you dare," and usually, at the other end of the building, a choir, well stocked with all materials for correspondence during sermon! (Having sung in a choir at a time when novels were read behind the organ loft, I speak with authority.) And between the two is the mass of the people, with no more part in the proceedings (save an occasional hymn where one man drives ten nearly frantic by singing out of tune) than the weather-vane on the steeple! The congregation say, in effect, to the minister, "Here we are: now entertain us for an hour, or we will go to sleep." Of course, a man will sleep, or look out of the window, or fumble the leaves of a hymn-book, or whisper to his neighbor, unless you give him something to do before the sermon. But in many forms of denominational usage it is unhappily the case that all other parts of service are looked upon merely as preliminaries to the discourse, when, in fact, a discourse would gain immeasurably in power if the current of religious feeling could be steadily deepened until the time for its delivery is at hand. As matters are now, the minister sustains all the burden, and the people

little or none of it, unless he preaches poorly, and in that case, the burden is relieved by slumber!

It is very clear, then, that the future of choir music, of liturgy and responses, of chant and hymnal, is simply immense. "Let the people praise thee; let all the people praise thee, O Lord," is the utterance of Holy Writ. If the ancient Temple worship had been conducted on the plan we are criticising, Israelitish history would have yielded no such psalmody as may be found in the early Scriptures. Barren worship is productive of no such blessed inspirations and emotions as follow what is truly congregational worship. I am ready to grant the existence of certain dangers. One is, as I have said, that the music may be simply an entertainment. When Archbishop Stephens, of New York, was dying he took the hand of a friend, and whispered, almost with his last breath, "Come to the funeral. The music will be splendid." It is easy to see how worshipers, nursed by such a passion, might come to look on the church as a kind of sanctified theater. Another danger is that the service largely ritualistic may be emptied of all feeling of true devotion. Dr. Lyman Abbott notes a great absence of seriousness in the Church of England services at St. Paul's and in the cathedral services of Ant-

werp, Cologne, and Paris. Undoubtedly there is valid ground for the objection that the æsthetics of worship may be considered at the expense of pungent admonitions of the conscience. Every feature of worship that is merely show, and which tends to make men reverent only in appearance, and sometimes hardly that, is perfectly useless in the cause of undefiled religion. But is there not a middle way between meagreness on the one hand and overladen sumptuousness upon the other, whose adoption would not only enrich the forms of worship, but also quicken the spiritual pulse of the hearer? I believe there is, and with brief and hurried emphasis I have sought merely to suggest a few of the many phases of the problem which now forces itself upon the people of all congregations. And upon this phase of the subject I will only remark that three principles must be duly observed in the construction of a satisfactory ritual: (1) The sentiment of reverence must be increased, and not diminished. All tendencies toward trivialness in the treatment of the great realities symbolized by worship must be sternly reproved. (2) There should be entire fitness of parts. Music, responses, prayers, must not be permitted to overweight each other. Proportion is as necessary in service as it is in archi-

tecture. (3) Concentration of effects. The aim of all worship should be to bring God nearer, and to lift the soul in adoration. Whatever contributes to these results—though it be an innovation—ought at least to receive a respectful hearing in the court of reason.

But I cannot bring this chapter to its close without touching upon the wide and general influence of music in soothing the stormy passions of mankind, and in the elevation of their thoughts through the subtle power of melody that vibrates along the diviner chords of our being. It is not the Church alone which must bring to the people the anthems whose uplifting strain subdues the discord of the life to the melody of that inward peace whose highest name is love. From every source that is pure, and from every hand and voice able to minister to human need by instrument or song, there must flow the magic sounds that banish care and conquer weariness. Steele quaintly says of the Italians, "There is not a laborer or handicraft man that, in the cool of evening, does not relieve himself with solos and sonatas!" and, Knight, in the "History of England," in referring to the age of Elizabeth, speaks of those exquisite compositions, the madrigals of the fireside, which made for almost every Eng-

lish household an open door to melodies that cheered the laborer's heart when the twilight bell rang to even-song. But how much of the might and power of song, of the sweet unison of sounds that flow from instruments well attuned, salutes the dull and tired senses of countless weary workers among the masses who toil for a pittance, and live in tenements because heaven affords no other shelter? I heard for almost an entire day the great master Remenyi draw his wondrous bow upon the obedient strings of his violin; I saw the little company who gathered round played upon by his genius as some mighty orator brings to the features of his hearers the outward sign of secret thought or passion; I watched the most noted unbeliever in the world until the melody began to quiver at the great overflowing heart of Robert Ingersoll, and as the big tears fell from the eyes which had so often flashed a withering scorn, I felt, as never before, the majesty of music as a gift immortal to the race. But what do the common people of America know of such a privilege? Our churches, with their famed and cultured singers, open neither doors nor pews; great symphonies, interpreted by Damrosch or Thomas or Nikisch, are rarely heard by those whose meagre wage forbids the neces-

sary outlay; there are no exquisite evening songs and vesper services and melodious numbers, that lift the care-worn heart to God, for thousands of the decent and worthy poor. Philanthropy can do as lofty and noble work in this direction as in any other, and it is an omen of good for the future that the Sunday afternoon concerts in the Central Park of New York, in which the services of the very best musicians were rendered, proved a delight and benefit to thousands who, for the hour, forget that they dwelt in hovels or that their children wanted bread. Open the galleries of art to the people; give them the choicest music; make them welcome in the famous libraries of the cities, on the one day of the week when the weary and heavy-eyed procession of toilers at loom and forge, at the sewing-table and in the stifling factory dust, halts at the Inn of Sabbath Rest. Ay! forget not the mission of those of whom Longfellow writes:

"God sent his singers upon earth,
With songs of sadness and of mirth,
That they might touch the hearts of men,
And bring them back to heaven again."

Let all who sing remember how high and holy

is their mission. Pure hearts and pure voices are sources of redemption to many a blasted and ruined life. "Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in thee"—how the lines melt to the tenderness of the Infinite Love! Wedded to appropriate melody and sung by him whose soul is filled with a joyous sense of the Divine Presence in forgiveness, these words become the hallowed prayer of a worshipful people. So with hundreds of the grand old hymns of the Church. When we put religion into music, either of instruments or of voices, and make the power of melody the power of the Holy Spirit in character, music rises to the measure of the old Hebrew conception of its place in the house of God, and becomes as the very breathing of that Harmony whose presence all space doth inhabit. The power of music in Christian worship is yet but a promise. Let the tides of religion in choir and congregation the deeper flow, and the sham of music, that sings the words without a sympathetic soul, will disappear forever, only to unveil the unutterable depths of a melody whose every tone is the master-tone of God.

CHAPTER XV.

A SYMPOSIUM!

[THE introductory paper in this volume entitled, "Wanted: A Society for the Decrease of the Ministry," was originally published in the *Evening Post,* under an anonymous signature and immediately attracted wide attention. Comments, both of approval and disapproval, appeared in many secular newspapers and religious weeklies. Ultimately, the New York *World,* in its Sunday edition, invited opinions upon the subject-matter from a number of well-known clergymen, and also invited the author to review the debate in its columns. Through the courtesy of the *World* I am now permitted to include these contributions in order to throw all possible light upon the existing situation. It is believed they will add interest to the discussion upon the existing status of the church and ministry. The author refrains from including his further comment upon the positions maintained by Dr. Harris, Dr. Everett,

and others because his own contention is already sufficiently clear, and also because he believes the essential point—to wit, the overplus of the clergy—is, upon the whole, sustained by the contributors to the *World* symposium. At all events, he is quite willing to let the controversy rest on its present basis in the hope that thoughtful men may find in these pages helpful suggestion in regard to the pressing problem of ministerial demand and supply.]

BY C. C. EVERETT,

DEAN HARVARD DIVINITY SCHOOL.

You ask me for a few words in regard to a recent communication signed "A Clergyman," which discussed the oversupply of ministers. This communication contains much truth and much good advice. In the Unitarian denomination the oversupply is largely owing to the great number of preachers that come to it from other religious bodies; and this year it is increased by the fact that, owing to the hard times, some churches, especially in the West, have been closed. I understand that a similar state of things exists in other denominations.

The counsel that your correspondent gives to theological seminaries cannot be too strongly

urged. These seminaries, for the most part, make no charge for room rent or tuition, and almost any young man of tolerable education and fair character can find a respectable seminary that will give him money enough to cover his general expenses. Thus the line of least resistance is the path that leads to the ministry. The competition comes only after the profession has been entered. The church thus gets preachers from whom it may select, but the process is a cruel one.

The church gets ministers in this way, but hardly gets the best. It is still as hard as ever, it seems harder than ever, to find men to fill the most important pulpits. Your correspondent admits that the candidate fresh from the seminary finds it comparatively easy to attain a settlement. This shows that the churches are looking out in hope for such men as it needs. I find that in the Harvard school men are tempted to leave at the end of their first or second year; the opportunities are so many. One man who left the Harvard school a year ago, a Presbyterian, tells me that he preached in seven churches and received a call from each. There is no doubt that a young man, well educated, with fitness for the work of the ministry, would not have to wait long for the opportunity that he desired.

All this shows the responsibility that rests upon the seminaries. Your correspondent refers to the Harvard school.

This gives its degree to no one who has not received the degree of A. B., except in the case of a man from a foreign country, who must show an education equal to that which is respresented by our A. B. It gives aid to no student who does not reach a certain degree of scholarship.

It has recently raised its yearly fee to $150. It is doing what it can to protect the ministerial profession, regardless of a probable loss in numbers. For the good of our churches, of whatever name; for the good of the young men, so many of whom are now being lured by easy paths into a profession for which they have little aptitude, and in which they will find, too often, disappointed hopes and wasted lives; it would welcome the co-operation of all other theological seminaries in the attempt to discourage such men from entering a calling that demands and well rewards the best.

BY DWIGHT L. MOODY.

The ministry is overcrowded because too many men are in it who do not know and cannot effectively use the English Bible. The average lay-

man learns with astonishment that very little Bible is studied in the three or four years spent in a theological seminary. Reasoning in the common-sense way in which he manages his own affairs, he has concluded that, since the business of a minister's life is to teach, preach and live the English Bible, therefore, the first object of a seminary training should be to make him master of it. No wonder he is amazed to learn that in most seminaries the English Bible is not a text book at all! It is as if a school of engineering should not teach the use of the theodolite, or a commercial college should omit bookkeeping.

The ministry is overcrowded with men who do not know how to preach. The ability to write religious essays of fair literary and ethical merit is widespread—but that is not preaching. It is pathetic to see these men seeking what they call the secret of those preachers who, like the late Mr. Spurgeon, draw great audiences year after year and lead thousands to Christ. They miss the so-called "secret" because it is so simple. If these men will throw away their essays, get rid of their doubts, get a burning conviction that men out of Christ are lost, that the Bible is true and that the Gospel saves, and will stand manfully up and tell men so, they, too will have audiences.

But the ministry is not, never was, never will be overcrowded with men called into the ministry under such constraint of God that woe is unto them if they preach not the Gospel; who know, believe and preach the people's Bible in the people's mother tongue; who are not seeking pulpits which have been made "desirable" by the labors of other men, but are willing to take hold in some needy place and create a desirable pulpit by prayer, straight, biblical, Holy-Ghost preaching and hard work.

And it may be added that such men are to-day as never before sought on every hand. They are the one article of which there is no oversupply, nor does God leave one of them without either an audience or an adequate support.

One of your correspondents thinks "the Moody school" is partly responsible for the throng of applicants for the "desirable" pulpits. I venture the assertion that no man sent forth with the commendation of the Chicago Bible Institute can be found in that throng, and I offer as food for reflection the fact that so far from swelling the host of unemployed ministers, the Bible Institute is wholly unable to meet the demand which the churches make for its men. The greatest

difficulty we have is to keep them until they finish the course of training and study.

BY THE LATE REV. JOHN HALL, D.D.

Regarding an oversupply of ministers much may be said that is true, but no more true than of other professions; but the difficulty is that the minister who is unemployed is easily identified. We cannot so easily indicate the lawyer or the doctor who has for years little or nothing to do.

It is true there are many ministers without charges, but they are not all useless. Many of them aid ministers in charge. Many use their pens to advantage, and some are useful teachers. It is an infelicity in American life that the "dead-line" is fixed too early in various fields of labor, and as an "old pastor" I dislike the application of this view to the ministry.

More than a quarter of a century ago I doubted the wisdom of extending pecuniary aid so freely as it is done in some of our seminaries. I would not have the seminaries refuse qualified applicants, but it would be prudent to allow young men to "make their own way" financially, even though it delayed their licensure, except in special cases. Many men would be stronger and more efficient through life if thus brought to cultivate

prudence, self-reliance and habits of steady effort. Where pecuniary aid is procured on the competitive scholarship plan, there is less ground for criticism.

As to "oversupply," there are many unemployed toilers on other than ministerial lines. Only to-day a respectable man out of employment said to me: "There are many applicants for such places as I have had, and even where there is a vacancy they thought me too old to be employed." He seemed in middle life.

As to the oversupply of churches, the question is: Are there too many for the people, or only too many for the people who go to church? It is a principle with the Board of Church Erection of the Presbyterian Church to keep out of competition where existing churches are supplying the wants of the people. It is to be remembered that in our land communities change. New England rural towns and villages have in some places lost the people who once sustained useful churches. There are towns in the newer regions that have not realized the hopes that drew many to them, and of which it would be true to say that there are not only too many churches, but also too many dry-goods houses, and even too many banks. Congregations and churches are

composed of human beings not infallible, and the law of demand and supply affects them as it does other organizations and companies. What we need in the nation is not a reduction in the number of ministers, but an increase of spiritual power, of fidelity to the Master, of the teaching and preaching of the glorious Gospel, and of reliance on the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of people and pastors.

BY THE REV. LEWIS W. MUDGE, D.D.,

PRINCETON, N. J.

The spirit of unrest so manifest in churches and among ministers is seen also in other professions and in business circles, and is the outcome of financial and social conditions. In the East, and especially in our larger cities, there is unquestionably a considerable number of unemployed ministers, and it is equally true that an unusual number of the graduates of our seminaries have not secured fields of labor. It would be unsafe, however, to draw the conclusion that the ministry is overcrowded.

There are other and more satisfactory ways of explaining these abnormal conditions. Ministers finding themselves without charges are apt to gravitate to the centers of population, and in this

they are not peculiar. As a result the large cities have a surplus, while other portions of the country, especially the West, are in need.

The heavy debts resting upon the mission boards largely account for existing conditions In former years it was not unusual for half a dozen synodical missionaries to appear in Princeton in February offering attractive fields in the West for more men than were available. Now not only is no advance made in the opening of new territory, but every effort is making to relieve the mission boards of their burdens by uniting churches under one pastorate and declining applications for appointments.

Let prosperous times return and the liberality of the churches respond as in former years to the calls of the Church and there would be numerous fields open. Even in existing conditions churches are not wanting to those who are willing and able to endure hardness.

BY THE REV. GEORGE HODGES,

Of the Episcopal Theological School, Cambridge, Mass.

It is true that every desirable vacant parish is pursued by an eager crowd of parsons, some of

them being out of employment, others being discontented with their cures. It is true also that after middle life many ministers find the door of opportunity shut in their faces.

It is a mistake, however, to think that this situation is peculiar to the ministry. The discomforts of it are made more public in the case of the clergyman than in the case of the physician or the lawyer, because the clergyman must obtain in a formal way, by a vote of a meeting, the suffrages of a considerable company of people. Everybody in the neighborhood knows about it. But the idea that competition is an evil which touches the clergy only or chiefly is contradicted by daily experience. Competition is the condition under which modern life goes on. Few men suffer from it so little as the parson.

If a young man is to be warned against entering the ministry because he will thus expose himself to competition, he needs a warning much more emphatic against becoming a doctor or a politician or a journalist or a man of business. And as for the case of the middle-aged clergyman who leaves his place before he has another and is consequently left without employment, it is paralleled in every profession. Let a middle-aged physician forsake his practice at a time when

he is unsuccessful or discouraged and move to another town where he is not known, will patients fill his office. No doubt there are instances of hardship, sometimes injustice, in the ministry as elsewhere, but the truth is that commonly when a man is no longer wanted by a parish it is not because he is old, but because he is inefficient. Indeed, the wonder is not so much that the people are sometimes ungrateful as that they are for the most part so patient. There are men in the ministry who keep their places because they are in a measure sheltered from the rude winds of competition which blow without. If they were in a business they would be discharged tomorrow.

It is true that ministerial salaries are small. Sometimes they are grievously small. That is the inevitable consequences of the present absurd and vicious sectarianism which weakens and discredits what a correspondent calls the "Protestant body." Any young man who is after large wages will best go elsewhere.

I know nothing of the situation in other churches, but it is plain to me so far as the Episcopal Church is concerned, that there never was a time when a true man of the right sort able to think, able to speak, devoted to the ad-

vancement of the kingdom of God, had a better chance to make the best use of all that is in him for the good of the community. The emphasis is changing from theology to philanthropy. The supreme interest is in the application of the teachings of Christ to the present problems of society. The minister is taking again his old place as the leader of his neighbors. He is standing between the rich and the poor, between the master and the man, helping each to understand the other.

For ignorant men, bigoted, narrow-minded, in sympathy with a past age and out of sympathy with the present, of scanty education and narrow abilities and no gifts of leadership, there is, indeed, no place in the ministry. And the more hindrances which the theological schools can put in the way of such men the better.

As a trade—as a way of making money—the ministry is a poor business; but as a profession—as an opportunity of the highest usefulness to the community—it is a life of joy and satisfaction.

BY DR. JAMES O. MURRAY,

DEAN OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY.

"What the Church wants is a higher intellectual standard. There are too many men in the

ministry that could not prosper at anything else and do not succeed here." Dr. Murray is doubtful whether, after all, the ministry is as overcrowded as law or medicine. The dean's idea, although he did not say it in these words, seemed to be that there was no small amount of laziness and lack of self-denial among those who are ordained to preach the Scriptures. Salary was not what the preacher was supposed to work for. Men who do are those who crowd the ministry, men who are not willing to go anywhere that God calls them, and go not for the salary.

The last point on which the dean was asked to give his opinion was the multiplicity of denominations. He said: "There is no doubt that there are too many denominations, and hence, often, too many churches in one community. There are many towns in the East, only large enough to support one, that have three or more churches, where one would furnish ample means of grace."

BY PROF. B. N. BACON,

Yale Theological Seminary.

I do not believe that the ministry is overcrowded, but I do believe that there are a good many men in the ministry to-day who would

make a better success in some other calling. Good ministers usually have a charge and bad ones don't deserve one.

BY THE REV. GEORGE HARRIS, D.D.,

President Amherst College.

It is undoubtedly true that the ranks of the ministry are at present overcrowded. The number of unemployed clergymen is increased somewhat by reason of the protracted depression of business. Some of the small churches are not able to pay a living salary, and the missionary societies are obliged to reduce their working forces.

These conditions, it is to be hoped, are temporary. The numerous applications for vacant pulpits are not conclusive as to the number of unemployed, for the same men have their names sent to many committees. Still there is a considerable excess which has been increasing the last few years. The decrease of the ministry is therefore as much desired now as the increase was formerly desired.

All will agree that there are not too many superior clergymen. If the ill-qualified men were eliminated there would be room and demand for all others. Reduction then should be made by

discrimination rather than by mechanical limitation of number on the part of the seminaries.

There are two questions: How to discourage incompetent men so that they will not choose the ministry, and how to encourage able and devoted men so that they will choose it. There is danger in pointing out the competition for places due to the excess of numbers of holding back those who ought to be preachers. They have a moderate estimate of their own abilities and are the first to decide that they will not go where they are not needed.

The first question can be partly answered by the seminaries. They can at least insist on a collegiate education. They can refuse to receive students who have not been through college. Although a liberal education does not of itself fit one to be a preacher, very few are qualified for the ministry who have not had such advantage. "An uneducated ministry," said a distinguished clergyman, "is the scourge of God."

The Eastern seminaries for the most part make this rule. If the Western seminaries had adopted it the last ten years, hundreds of half-educated clergyman would now be in some other occupation. Further, the seminaries should give pecuniary aid only to students whose stand-

ing is above the average. The societies which make grants of aid should insist on the same conditions. At the doors of some of the seminaries is to be laid that lowering of the intellectual standards of the ministry which discourages many of the best men from becoming preachers. It is a gratifying fact that there is a disposition to raise the educational standard. As this is more and more insisted on a multitude of inferior men will be excluded.

The second question can be answered by the young men themselves. The knowledge that the ministry is overcrowded and of the growing demand for well-equipped clergymen is really favorable to the choice of that profession by able and earnest young men. There is no longer an artificial pressure impelling them towards the ministry. They are no longer told that every educated Christian should be a preacher unless there are decisive reasons to the contrary. They know that fitness as well as impulse should determine. They know that the reaction which has set in against unfit and uneducated men assures a welcome to those who have suitable gifts and thorough education.

The recognition of an evil is a long step towards its correction. By all means let those

who know they have only average abilities, inadequate training and no strong bent for preaching choose some other occupation in which they can be more useful. And also, by all means, let those who have gifts of speech and persuasion, strong convictions, character and culture, choose the Christian Ministry, which for the right man is as truly the best profession as it ever was. Of such men there is need. For such men there are always places.

Fitness for the ministry is not limited to brilliant oratorical power. But there certainly should be ability to speak to a company of people so as to interest, instruct and impress them. There should be a strong impulse to bring men into the Christian faith and life. There should be the sympathetic temperament and the spirit of unselfishness. With such gifts, which are not uncommon, with a good education and with a strong inclination to preach one is certain of some measure of success.

If a competent and devoted man is deterred by the overcrowding of the ministry, let him remember that other professions and occupations are even more overcrowded so far as numbers are concerned and that it would be a miracle if the ministry were an exception, and that few men

who are really fitted for the pursuits they have entered meet with total failure.

I admit, then, that there are too many ministers but not that there are too many well-qualified ministers. I think that exposure of the evils which attend the reception of inferior men will tend to turn them to other pursuits and that the seminaries will not make the path to the ministry so easy as it has been. The remedy is discrimination rather than wholesale reduction.

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